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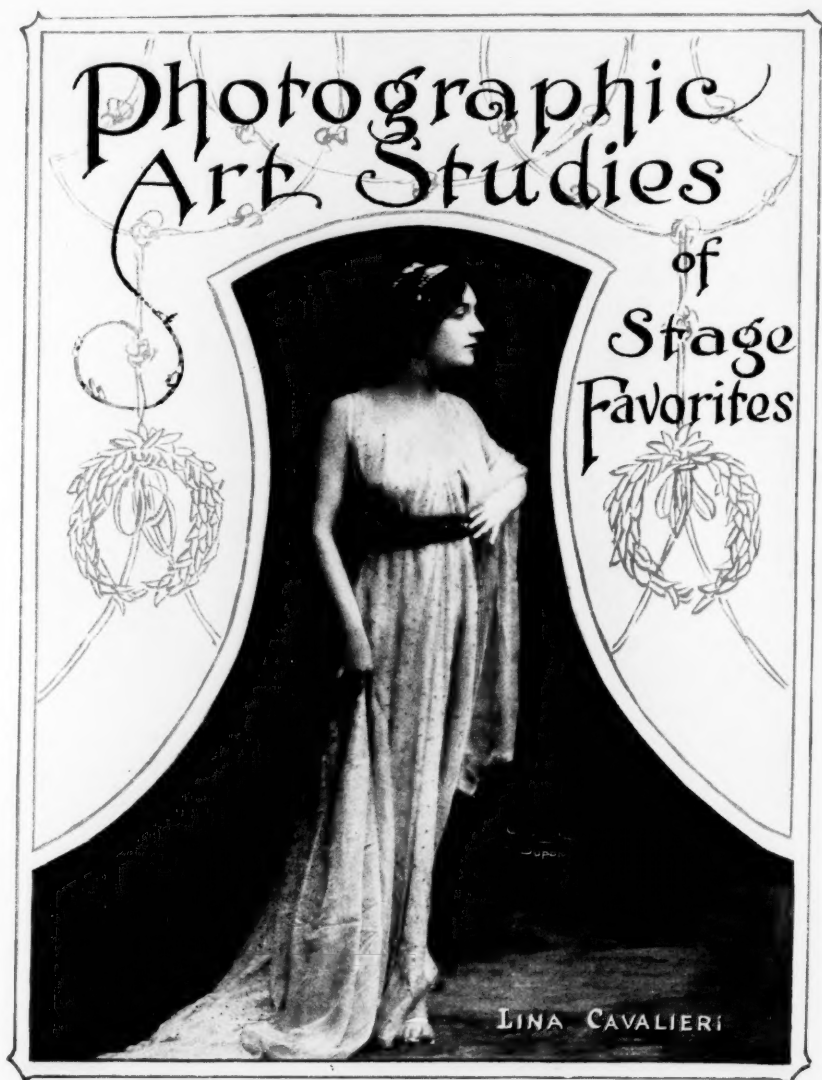




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MME LINA CAVALIERI
With Hammerstein's Opera Company in London



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In "The Duchess"



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With the Chicago Grand Opera Company



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MISS LEONORE HARRIS
In "The Lights o' London"

The Tinsel Queen

By Nalbro Bartley

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

CHAPTER I.

THE future Queen of Hearts was eating bread and jam, and talking excitedly to the dowager, who had a somewhat worried look on her majestic forehead. As loyal subjects of the queen, let it be known what her majesty was saying:

"I know I'll come out all right, even if it does look dangerous on the face of it. I must—I simply must do it. Think of the salary—twenty-five dollars a week! Did you ever imagine such wealth? To earn, possess—spend?"

"But, Peggy, will the means justify the end?" asked the dowager, still unconvinced.

"Yandeedy," she answered hurriedly, "it won't really hurt me. It'll only be another experience, another something to look back on, and laugh over. You know how my whirl at 'governessing' went—and this——"

"But *this*, Peggy; to pose as a wax figure at the exposition! Before crowds of people, who will talk you over, perhaps insult you——"

"But I'll be wax," protested the would-be queen, helping herself with true royal greed to more jam, "wax, dear, and you don't have feelings."

"I have heard of wax melting," observed the queen mother quietly.

"Don't be a wet blanket," commanded her majesty, "think—a queen, dressed in white 'sating,' beautiful paste gems, and yellow hair." And she looked with disdain at the heavy braids of dull brown, reflected in the opposite mirror.

"My child," pleaded her mother, "I cannot help you. But surely you must see for yourself how foolish it would be. I can't let you, Peggy."

"Yes, you can. I'm grown up—twenty years old—and staid—wasn't I a governess for three months? And I'm tired of doing nothing, and seeing

you deny yourself everything. No, I won't give it up. Call me willful, shallow, headstrong, wayward—but you must and shall call me queen."

"The little money you will receive, Peggy, will not pay you for the hard work, the strain, the——"



She looked into the cracked, stained mirror, and saw—a girl's face unnaturally white and red, and eyes heavily underlined.

"Yes, it will. I won't let myself be hurt—think of the royal salary I'll receive."

"Tell me again, Miss Scatterbrain, how you ever tumbled into it."

"I was walking downtown, feeling that all things were impossible, and I most of all, when I saw a card in a window, which sufficeth to say: 'Expert model wanted—particular work—good pay.' Then I bolted in—never thinking. I used to pose for the art class at school, so I thought I could do it. I imagined some antique artist, who would give me fifty cents per. But instead, I met a self-important gentleman, who had three finger rings, a thumb ring, and a seven-stone stickpin. Also, his self-important wife, equally adorned. Both looked me over carefully, inquired into all my past secrets, and then explained their ad. They are in charge of a card booth at the exposition, and want a model to pose as a wax Queen of Hearts. This keeps the public guessing as to whether she is wax or real; meantime the said public are coaxed to buy whist trays, packs of cards, and poker outfits. I am to have a 'stunning dress, and elegant hair,' as the self-important lady confided. In addition to this, they require some one who has a face that 'wouldn't stop an eight-day clock, and none of the common riffraff. And you will receive twenty-five dollars a week—working only four hours a day.' They asked your fond and only che-eild to pose. I can't understand really why I was chosen.

"Oh, yes, dear, I saw the cheapness and tawdriness of it all, but I accepted because I am headstrong, and reckless, and willful, but"—here her majesty's voice sounded anything but imperial, as she sobbed out: "I—I wanted to help you. There's so much to be done, and I wanted to do my share. I suppose I'll be arrested for false pretenses, and you'll have to sell your hair to bail me out."

The dowager, well versed in affairs of state, took the weeping royal personage in her arms to comfort her.

"My dear," she whispered, "this helps

me most of all, and if you have truly set your heart on it—I can't refuse. But queen or no queen—Margaret, *be careful.*"

The queen revived quickly, and exclaimed, with American simplicity:

"You bet. I'll slip in and out to the grounds, and no one shall know who I am. My hair will save me—my golden hair!"

The dowager smiled half-heartedly, but entered into the plans for the coming reign with diplomatic tact.

With Peggy, past hard times and disappointments were quietly put aside, as though they were things "that had to be," and the next day lived as if nothing but the sweetest pleasures had preceded it. Mingled with this were her love of excitement, and her restless longing for "something to happen and things to change." In five small rooms in an old-fashioned building, up dark, stumbly stairs, excitement and adventure do not stoop to visit. At times the reins choked Peggy, and such mad escapades as the one upon which she had just entered were the result.

The brightness of the next day lent a certain latent activity to every inanimate object. The hustle and bustle of the fair crowds seemed to be transmitted to the blocks and stones. Peggy rose early. She danced with pure happiness, even though she washed dishes and tended the needs of the canary. At half past nine, she put on her blue sailor, and began her farewells to the dowager, whose spirits were not quite as overflowing as those of Peggy.

"Good-by, queen mother. I'm so happy, I'm positively foolish. Be sure and come to the fair about four this afternoon—Graphic Arts Building—and see your daughter in her new and exalted position. Yes, you must. Have I not commanded it thus? And am I not to receive twenty-five dollars a week for merely looking waxlike?"

"Good-by. I've left everything for your lunch—I shan't be home, because this morning I'll have to practice posing, and see if the royal robes need any alterations. I promise to get something to eat in between times. Don't worry.

What did you say? 'Be among the midway folk?' No, indeed. Hear me, I am queen."

And Peggy dramatically disappeared backward through the doorway. The dowager sat quietly, a sad little smile on her lips, as she twisted her well-worn wedding ring nervously.

"Sit down, Maggie, and I'll fix you lovely."

"Please, do you use rouge?"

Mrs. Pete J. Calland, the proprietor's wife, steadied herself against a wire form in the corner of the dingy dressing room. She let the cover to the "Rouge de Théâtre" drop from her bejeweled clutch.

"Say, haven't you ever been in this deal before?"

"Oh, yes, lots of times." The queen's eyes were still fastened on the rouge box. "But it was at school—and I never used any coloring."

"Well, that doesn't go in this game. We're in for wax, and it's wax you've got to look like."

Then followed hideous, greasy dabs of red across her face, and more of deep blue around her eyes. Then that choky, ghastly powder—even her eyebrows were penciled and her ears tinted. The heavy braids of brown hair, always so carefully brushed and cared for, were tumbled into a tight knot, saturated with cheap cotton oil, and covered with a golden wig. The queen's head drooped low as she felt the last wig pin being fastened into the uttermost parts of her skull.

"Now," she heard Mrs. Calland—Mudie, her husband called her—say, "if you can find anybody else that can make up better than that, I'll pack my trunk to-night. It seems as though the firm ought to pay me an extra salary. But, as usual, I do everything for everybody, and nothing ever seems to be done for me. Mr. Calland is one of the traveling men of the firm, and was selected out of forty-two others to take charge of this exhibit. Of course, he gets his salary, and I do the work, and it ain't any easy job, either. But I'm used to doing these things. If I wasn't married

I could show the world what a real actress is. Leslie Carter would fade away. But, as I said to you coming out in the car, Pete won't listen to me doing nothing. Well, what do you think of my work?"

Peggy raised her head slowly. She looked into the cracked, stained mirror, and saw—a girl's face, unnaturally white and red, and eyes heavily underlined. Large earrings were in the small, tinted ears, and a collar of cheap brilliants encircled the nervously contracting throat. Above it all were masses, and waves, and braids, and curls of golden, sunshiny hair, which looked so real that Peggy wished she might wear it always.

"It—is very good," she faltered, "and kind in you to take the trouble—but then—"

"Oh, I don't mind. I'm used to it. And you're worth while really; your face is swell to work on. You're not pert or forward, and you won't fool around my Pete the way most of these artists' daubs do."

Peggy swallowed hard. She was glad to have received her orders so early in the game. There was scarcely any danger of her disobeying. A cloud of white satin was thrown over her, and a ruffle of lace, a sparkling fan, and long, red gloves—she was queen! She heaved a sigh of satisfaction as she saw herself in the long, court-trained gown, with its border of red hearts, the strings of pearls, the lace handkerchief on its slender gold chain, and the jeweled butterfly in the warm, yellow hair.

A tap sounded. Mrs. Pete yelled "Come in!" as she hastily daubed the powder puff over her yellow cheeks, and added a hairpin to her roll of greasy black hair.

Pete J. Calland entered.

"What the devil are you doing?" he demanded abruptly. Then, catching sight of the queen: "Oh, I don't know—that's not so bad, is it?"

"I guess you'd think so, if you had to do it all," replied Mrs. Pete.

"You're gilt-edged," confided Mr. C. to the queen. "Come on, Mudie, open up the show—we've got a mob out here

that ain't the A B C sort, either. Brace up, queenie, take a reef in your shoulders, and act like a wooden woman."

The queen walked out. She did not try to appear mechanical, because she could not have acted otherwise. Each step was an effort. A fat, darky major met her at the door. Two pages, a street gamin, and a newsie, clad in flashy suits of red, stared at her, saluted, and then held her train as she stalked ahead. Mrs. Pete walked closely beside her, whispering to walk stiff, and give anybody who spoke to her a dirty look.

The dressing room lay in the rear of the Graphic Arts Building. At least, the promenade would be a short one.

"She's a wonderful piece of work," said an old lady reverently. "Think of that being wax!"

"Oh, my, look at the train," bashfully whispered a little girl, and then she leaned forward to stroke the shining satin.

Mrs. Pete jerked her back roughly. "See here, kiddo, leave the figger alone."

The child sank back, abashed. A man saw the white throat move, ever so slightly, and laughed.

"She's no wax," he jeered.

Oh, the booth! Would she ever reach it?

A wonderfully constructed sort of throne awaited her. It was decorated on all sides by small red hearts, brilliantly lighted with electric bulbs. The heavy purple cloth seemed to attract the heat, and the queen waxed warm as she sank regretfully into the folds of her throne. Mr. Pete placed her hands in corpse fashion across her lap, her fan was artistically stuck between her thumbs.

"Set the machinery going," whispered Mrs. Pete to her husband, in a tone meant for all the world to hear.

Pete J. mounted the throne. The crowd pressed nearer and nearer to the counter. They fairly fell upon her. She winked mechanically. A rustle went through the mob. Then Mr. Pete's short, dirty fingers were laid on her neck. She would have cried out,

had she dared. He patted her softly, familiarly, and began to wind an imaginary key, situated somewhere along her spinal column. This was her cue. The waxen hands were slowly unfolded, and the sparkling fan waved gracefully through the air, punctuated by wooden winks and a violent upheaving of her breast to imitate breathing.

She began promptly. Mrs. Pete's eye was watching her eagerly; the crowd, ready to laugh in a second's warning at the smallest blunder. Mr. Pete's hand touched her throat, her head, her waist. She looked at the sea of faces for a moment. She winked—she breathed.

"If she's alive, she's the greatest wonder yet," said a business man.

"If she's alive," said his wife, who bespoke the minister's helping hand, "she's a menace to society. Think of our Bessie doing such a thing."

"Maybe the poor devil can't help it—there's a sorry look about her eyes—perhaps she's only sawdust and asbestos, after all, and our sympathy's wasted. Come on, Nell." And they moved away.

Mrs. Pete reached up to replace a fallen curl. "Turn your head back and forth. Have you forgotten all you were told? And don't try to make crushes at the same time."

Back and forth, side to side, moved the curly head, heavier than the dearest gold.

"She ain't wax," said a woman decisively. "Her eyes are tired-looking."

She walked away, as though sorry that flesh and blood replaced stuffing and glue.

The golden head stopped. The crowd roared. Oh, that pushing, pressing, roaring crowd of eyes, and noses, and heads, and bodies!

"She's run down! She's broke! She's out of steam! Give her a drink! Wind her up! Get up power! Ho! she's bursted—"

The sun poured in on the booth; the electric lights were blinding; the noise of the outside spielers and venders sounded like a roar; the bleared eyes of a roué were riveted on the girl; the crowd was laughing, half amused, half

curious. Just then, Peggy raised her eyes and saw her mother.

She was there, in accordance to command—alone, aside from the others. The look in her eyes, the set of her mouth—she understood it all. But the Queen of Hearts could not move—for she was only wax.

Both the Callands were busy winding her up. On the whole, her stopping so abruptly had not been a bad play. It carried out the idea of a lay figure. But the queen did not move quickly, her eyes were fixed in one place.

"Move, damn you!" whispered Mr. Pete.

"This ain't no kindergarten job," retorted his wife. Like many others, if the spouse abused, she upheld; if he approved, she condemned.

"We ain't paying no kindergarten salary," he hissed back, his warm hand resting on the queen's arm.

"I guess she'd better walk around the building—that'll blow it all over. Boys, get on your gloves."

Walk! To walk around that building, with those people following her! And her mother—

The grimy-faced pages drew on their ornamented gauntlets, and eyed her majesty with amusement.

The fat major domo met her with a salute, and walked ahead. Mrs. Pete, moving the machinery, pressed close beside her. The pages, half dragging her train, followed; and then came the aimless mob.

Peggy felt numb and cold. She had just swept by her mother without the flicker of an eyelash.

Peggy felt as though she could not stand it—she swayed to one side. But only for an instant. For an arm—not Pete Calland's—but a strong, sinewy arm supported her, and a low, deep voice said:

"Your figure is a bit top-heavy, isn't it?"

She opened her eyes, and saw, just above her, two dark eyes, saying more plainly than words: "You're tired, aren't you? And horribly unhappy and unused to this sort of thing? And you're trying so hard to make people

think you're wax. So they shall. I'll help you all I can. But I know better."

The man was gone in an instant, leaving only a trace of tobacco odor, and the glimpse of a rough tweed coat. The moist palm of Peter, prime minister, was supporting her, likewise the malicious glance of Mudie. She was wax once more!

Six o'clock brought a heavenly freedom to the Queen of Hearts. She tore out of the satin dress, and clutched the collar of brilliants from her throat. Mrs. Calland assisted her gingerly.

"You might have done worse," she conceded ungraciously. "The first day always goes a little hard. But don't ever get cold toes again—wax fingers don't faint, where I come from."

The queen's mouth set hard. Could she manage to break her contract?

"I am not accustomed to this sort of work," she began softly. "It isn't as I thought it would be. I am sorry I have made you all this trouble. Could you find a substitute?"

"A substitute!" shrieked Mrs. Pete, in true coyote style. "Quit—sneak—leave us in the lurch—I guess not! It'll cost you the season's salary. You can pay us the coin and walk your own canal path, or else stick. Did you hear that raving? Ain't we good enough? Don't I slave, and work, and dig to make you look swell and me be content, while you get all the public admiration and your good, fat salary? Pete, the lady's peevish; she feels the warm weather; get out your electric, and run her down to Newport for a bracer."

Peter Calland's familiar, squatty figure appeared abruptly.

"Don't try that game here," he began, and then added: "Mudie, she was faint. It's no cinch to act like a mummy, and I bet she didn't have no lunch."

Hungry! That was what made the sharp pain in her head.

"I haven't eaten since breakfast," she said shyly.

"Now, what do you know about that? We ain't no county-house overseers. Get on your dry goods, and come on out to dinner. We'll take in a side show or two afterward."



She swayed to one side. But only for an instant.

Long afterward, the queen wondered what would have happened had she accepted. The sword of Damocles was no more threatening than the eye of her would-be hostess. Mr. Pete did not know that his wife had given out instructions earlier in the day.

"Thank you just as much," she said icily, "but I must go home."

Mrs. Pete looked relieved.

"Sleep's always better. You'll feel like a black-eyed Susan in the morning. I'll tell you a secret after a while."

Mr. Pete took the cue, and disappeared. Mrs. Pete came nearer.

"When I was eighteen," she confided, "I ran away, and went in the chorus of 'The Blacksmith's Daughter.' I was in the front row, too. But what I was going to say was that the first month out, I cried for my mother every night. Then I got crazy about the biz, but it didn't pay. So I quit, and went into the make-up business. I traveled with a lady agent, and was the demonstrator. Say, I wish you'd wear this wig home to-night; it'd fit better to your head to-

morrow. It does look swell. You did right, Maggie, about going out to dinner. It don't look nice, and I was always one to be careful about looks. That's what I go by. Pete's so careless like, but I guess I can keep tabs for Mudie. I will say that Mr. C. has awful fits of jealousy sometimes. But I can't help being jolly and popular. It's my nature. Pete does take on terrible. You see, I'm only twenty-four, and he thinks I'm sort of childish."

The queen reflectively saw herself in the incubator stage, as compared with "Mudie's" age, but she pinned on the blue sailor hat, this time over masses of golden hair, without comment.

"Good-by, Maggie. You'll do. Be here at one sharp to-morrow, and don't get that Julia Marlowe curl out of kilter. Coming, Pete."

The door closed. Oh, she was Peggy Burton, flesh and blood—and yellow hair!

Home through the crowded grounds she flew. Her once-desired pass was crushed in her hands. She fled past each person as though life and death were the issue. Once she caught sight of herself in a mirror. Her face, half powdered yet, and the yellow wig, made it seem a stranger pictured in the glass. She paused for a moment, while waiting for the car. Had she left home only a few hours ago? It seemed a century. A man pressed close beside her.

"I beg your pardon—it is such a jam." He stopped—that hair, those eyes, he had seen them somewhere. Yes, white satin and red hearts—why, of course, the gaudy little Queen of Hearts, who had nearly fainted that afternoon. Peggy's heart beat wildly. The eyes, the rough tweed coat, the tobacco smell. She smiled faintly. If she had only had her own hair!

"Are you feeling better?" he ventured. "This heat is enough to floor any one, especially when under a strain."

"I—am tired. You see, it was new sort of work, and my first day. I have never done anything of the kind before. But it will be easier, after a while."

"I can't see how you do it. I wish—
is this your car? Good night."
And again Sir Incognito vanished.

CHAPTER II.

With a head as sadly muddled as Rip Van Winkle's after his lengthy nap, the Queen of Hearts started the next day of her reign. The wig, sadly tossed and twisted, shone resplendent in the sun, making its wearer feel a gleam of brightness. The dowager gave her a good-by kiss, with the suggestion to cultivate her sense of humor, and the queen started gayly forth afresh.

Bang! She had dropped her umbrella and her purse. If she bent suddenly, would her hair still cleave unto her, forsaking all others as long as she should bend? It was a danger not to be trifled with. She paused hopelessly. A moment later, they were handed to her, and a familiar voice said:

"I'm afraid we're going to have another scorching day."

"*He!*" she thought, and mentally added: "Are you like all the other foolish ones, having an impossible *he*? You ought to be ashamed, you painted creature."

She prepared a cutting answer, but her eye fell upon the Julia Marlowe curl, glittering in the sun. So she laughed instead.

"Thank you—you seem to appear just in the hour of trial. Tell me, are you in the employ of Aladdin and His Lamp Company?"

"I wish I were, but truth, and my rural accent, compel me to say no. Simply a sight-seer at the fair, and a humble servant of your majesty's."

The queen flushed. She had completely forgotten that rôle in the space of two minutes. Her wig seemed to bear upon her with the torture of thumbscrews. One of the things which the dowager had duly instilled into the young sovereign's head last evening was the fact that a position of this nature might lead to unpleasant situations, unless the part were acted in royal fashion, both in and out of reigning hours.

"I do not require allegiance, except

where I ask for it," she answered simply, thinking of the dowager's very true remarks. "Thank you again. Good morning."

Her arm was nudged gently. He stood before her—repentant, unknighted.

"I meant no harm—have I displeased you?"

"I said nothing of offense—there is never any taken, except when deserved."

She walked on; he followed swiftly. "But you are hurt—I can see it."

His voice was concerned. Did he think her a painted show girl, whose existence was a life like this?

"Good morning," she answered breathlessly.

"Some day I shall see you again," he answered quietly, and, lifting his hat, left her.

Some day—as though such a time could ever come!

The fair was in full swing when she entered the pass gate. Some school children were out to-day, running here and there, pulling at the clothesline to which they were attached. The grounds stretched out—gay, green, tempting. She would have loved nothing better than to walk briskly in and out the inviting little nooks, discovering the secret paths and enticing resting places.

But there was nothing to do but to be made up again, and ascend her throne.

The day wore on; the Greek jewelry men droned their wares at the other end of the building; the Coney Island candy man loitered up and down wearily; the pages relaxed from their duty of handing out printed matter to the throngs; Bill, the major, fell fast asleep, and even the queen's eyes were strangely heavy.

Then they opened briskly. Sir Incognito stood in front, as unassuming, as bored, and careless, as though he were merely a footsore transient on an excursion ticket. The queen's head turned to and fro, almost frantically. He came up to the booth, to the side where Mrs. Pete was engaged on a wonderful piece of blue and green roses flying, through a deep purple atmos-

phere. He began talking to her; she dropped her embroidery, and smiled graciously.

The queen could not catch a single whisper. Mrs. Pete was all smiles, she lingered over her replies, and asked him questions. Why was the queen so above them? She couldn't even hear Mrs. Pete's voice. Back and forth—side to side, now breathe, now turn, now wink—back and forth, side to side—she mustn't stop.

She longed to throw her detestable little fan, with that self-conceited Cupid on it, at Mrs. Pete, and cry out:

"Don't you dare talk about me! Don't you dare say a single word! You've no right!"

It was maddening. Mrs. Pete nodded and smiled; so did the unknown questioner. Back and forth—side to side, now breathe, now wink—

She looked at this disturber of the peace from one corner of her eye. He was tall and thin—too thin, she pettishly decided. The kind of leanness denoting strength and stubbornness and—breakfast foods, and shower baths, and horseback.

Her ordeal was soon over. In another moment he lifted his hat jauntily, and strolled away, without even a glance at the indignant sovereign.

At five minutes after six, Mrs. Pete was pulling off the satin dress and gloves, and chattering happily.

"That was a queer-looking piece of furniture that was talking to me to-day. Did you see him?"

The queen's temperature rose perceptibly. As it did so, she felt a wave of resentment at her own self.

"Let me see—oh, the tall, dark man with dark eyes and a tweed suit, and ——" She must not describe him too carefully.

"That's the one. He was real nice, and said the booth was the best he'd seen, and asked all about who done it, and said you was the best wax figger this side of the water. I told him I done a good deal of it. He said he knew that, he could tell there was an artistic hand to blame. It was that

made it attractive. He was a nice fellow. What say?"

"Did he really think I was wax?" asked the queen.

"Certainly. Never more surprised in his life when I told him you weren't. I wanted to have him see how well I could make up. I told him you were a little chorus girl, so as not to let him get wise as to who you were. I was sure you wouldn't like it. I told him just how I did it. First the rouge, then the grease paint—that's where lots make a mistake—then the powder, more rouge, and the eye pencils, and——"

"Was that all you told him about me?" interrupted Peggy, who stood, hat in hand, with a mad desire to choke every bit of make-up in sight down Mrs. Pete.

"No; he asked me what company you was with. I told him you traveled with 'The Blue Moon' during the winter." She prodded the queen playfully in the ribs.

Peggy's cheeks burned hotly.

"How dared you?" she cried. "Don't you think it is enough of an insult to do this sort of work, without having you add to it with lies? I would have broken the contract yesterday if I could. Suppose I should meet that man some day—what would he think? What does he think?" And the blue sailor hat was converted into a handkerchief.

Mrs. Pete was doubtful about the cause of tears. If the queen had shaken her fist, and started to throw things, she could have joined in speedily, and done her share. As it was, she was non-plused.

"Why, Mag, don't take it so hard. I've had to do lots of things that's gnawed my vitals, and yet have I born them in silence. He won't say nothing, even if I did tell him your real name. You won't ever see him again, and you needn't feel so about being poor. That ain't no cell mark."

The queen lifted her head, and transformed the handkerchief back into a hat.

"Perhaps you are quite right," she said.

The door closed, and Mudie pro-

ceeded to use the rest of the make-up on her own wrinkled face. Then she sauntered out to meet Pete. If she had known that the gentleman in question had just spied the queen, running away in Cinderella style, with traces of tears on her cheeks, and had followed her to find out what was brewing, she would not have met him so calmly.

Unlike Cinderella, the queen failed to escape; even if her dress did not change to rags, her slippers fall off, or her hair suddenly disappear. She reached the end of the midway, and was rushing past the Eskimo Village, when a parade of those same persons hindered her progress. She was penned in by the surrounding mob. So she resigned herself to watching the fat creatures as they walked back and forth, cracking whips and leering at the crowd.

The queen tried to collect herself mentally. She was fresh from the pursuit of Mr. Pete, who had ardently followed her down the parade; she laughed as the thought of Mrs. Pete's tragedy-laden face were she to hear of it. If so, would she ever be taken into confidence, and called the rippling, musical name of Mag? A cool breeze swept across the grounds. The queen looked up high to watch the balloons. Their poise rested her. Some one touched her arm.

"Again we meet, a pleasure unexpected—doubly sweet. Original, I assure you, and really ought to be approved, when you consider the unfavorable conditions to inspiration in this perspiring crowd."

If Peggy's gray matter could have been exposed to the vulgar gaze, these sentiments would have been found within: "It is the man—he—the same—he knows—he is trying to find out more—I wish I could turn into one of those lumps of ice, and then melt! What shall I do? I must answer, of course. He is all through talking. What shall I say? Oh, this awful wig!"

Then aloud: "I am detained here. I hope they will be through soon."

"Perhaps we can slip out through the back?"

"No, thank you," she answered stiffly.

"Just as you say," answered the Terror. "Did you find it as warm to-day?" He was talking to her familiarly. Queen mother, you were right!

She did not answer, only pressed more ardently toward a stout German lady, who had a baby in her arms. Not at all discouraged, the Terror elevated his voice slightly:

"Was it just as warm to-day?"

The German matron nodded carelessly.

"Yah!" she laughed.

Then they both laughed, and Peggy almost forgot Mudie's "cute tricks."

"It was dreadfully warm—I nearly went to sleep. To-morrow I shall be quite used to it, I hope."

"You never did any of this sort of work before?"

"Never!" This with great force. "And I never will again."

"You are an actress?"

Peggy faced him squarely, despite the pressing crowd.

"See here," she began, as she always did in times of war, "what on earth do you mean with this questioning? Don't you suppose I saw you when you came to the booth to-day? I saw you when you flattered and pried about me. And Mrs. Calland had the bad taste to tell me just what she said—that I was a chorus girl hard up for work. And you believed it, didn't you? But then, why shouldn't you? I dare say I look it with this hair. But I can't help that. And so you manage to follow me, and ask me all these questions. I wish you would go away. It is all a lie. I hate this work, worse than being a governess—I never was behind a theater in my life. I—I—"

The queen's vocal powers deserted her. She could only stare into space, and think: "In the name of Heaven, what did I say?" feeling her wig pins frantically.

The man had started slightly when she began; then he settled into a take-it-all-and-listen-to-what-you-have-to-say air, and now there was the same look in the eyes as when she had fainted—was it only yesterday?

"I only wish," he said, in a quiet, con-

vincing manner, "that I could tell you how sorry I am all this has come about. You misunderstand it all." Peggy felt herself becoming assured, and foolishly, madly happy. "Do you suppose," he continued, "that Mrs. Calland fooled me? Do you really believe that I took her word for granted? Tell me—do you?"

"N-no," confessed the queen meekly.

"Don't bother about it any more. It is only good time lost." He looked at her a moment, and then added: "Let's get out of this crowd."

The decision in his voice made one feel the worries rolling off into nothingness. She felt absurdly light-hearted. They threaded their way down the almost deserted parade.

"You've been crying," he said abruptly.

"I'm quite through," she answered as quickly.

He smiled, and looked down indulgently.

"I'm hungry," he announced, a second later. "And so are you—or ought to be, after that strain. Come in here—it is rather good."

The queen had a guilty feeling somewhere around where the capitol of Heartdom is supposed to be located.

"Mother——" she began feebly.

"Will be glad to see you a little later. Be sure and introduce me in royal style. I'm not at all up on presentations at court."

The queen weakly followed him. They sat at a table far away from the rest, and gazed contentedly at each other. It really was absurd. But what are you going to do when a man wears imported tweed, and has bushy eyebrows, and a blue-ribbon bulldog set of the mouth? At this juncture, the fiendish thought of Peggy's hair overcame her. Supposing it should simply tumble off! She had known of false teeth and glass eyes hopping merrily into the soup or glasses of water. But supposing this glorious crown of spun gold should suddenly embrace the butter or the salad?

She put one hand up nervously.

"Don't!" he commanded, in a lordful manner. "It is just right. Your hair—

pardon me—is superb. Without it, your reign would fail you!"

Horror of horrors and cruelest of fates! He thought it was *real*!

She ate but little, keeping a nervous eye on herself in the opposite mirror. What would her mother say, should she see her here? And what would she say when she brought him home, and told all? And what might she say if she did not bring him home? And how had it ever happened, anyway, that she had meekly followed—yes, followed—a stranger in here, and sat opposite consuming lobster salad and watercress?

"My name is Arthur Dudley," he said casually, handing her a card. "I live in Dudley, nearly two hundred miles from here. I lay claim to the title of lawyer, and I intend to take you home and be presented to the 'power behind the throne.' So you may as well stop worrying about it, and finish your salad—it is very good."

"Thank you, I was worrying. And the salad is good. I warn you that the dowager will scold, but she is not at all ferocious. My name is Margaret Burton—Peggy for short, and Mrs. Calland calls me Mag. I am a lady of leisure except when court duties call me. I was once a governess, but was dismissed on the ground of being too young."

The two bowed solemnly. At last they were formally introduced, and, having demolished everything in sight, they passed out into the crowded mid-way, gay with lights, and discordantly attractive with sounds. They sauntered leisurely down to the gates, chatting as though they had known each other all ways.

When Peggy came in sight of home she had a not-at-all-sure sensation.

Not that she had any idea that the dowager would demean her position—not for a moment. The queen was positive that had she brought in a baby alligator or two, they would have been received with the manner of one accustomed to their society. It was when this Sir Dudley had departed, and the queen, humbly clad in pajamas, after the dowager had locked up the palace.

and returned to the council chamber to say: "Tell me about it, Peggy." This was the time the queen dreaded.

In the entry the queen hesitated.

"March ahead," commanded Dudley. "I am faithful unto death."

The dowager was standing at the head of the stairs.

"My child, where have you been?" she began, stopping short at the sight of the man behind her.

"Yes, I know I'm late," answered the queen, after a hasty kiss, "but it wasn't my fault. I've brought the culprit with me. That is—we—he—he wanted a presentation at court. And I thought maybe you might—Dowager Burton—permit me—Sir Arthur Dudley. Now, please don't scold, and let me tell you all about a funny woman to-day."

"You were kind to my little girl, Mr. Dudley. The crowds are disagreeable. Come in, please. Have you eaten, Margaret?"

Admirable dowager!

"Yes—that is, we did."

"And you still are wearing the—"

The dowager was brutally kicked under cover. She stopped tactfully. The queen gave her a look of loving thanks.

And if the dowager was clever in diplomatic tact, Sir Arthur Dudley had infinite deftness in being thrown with royalty in so short a time. He wholly sustained the conversation, the dowager

filling in the wedges, and the queen, as customary, being merely a figurehead. With good sense, the visiting knight did not remain long, and taking his leave asked if he might come again.

The queen's heart became poised as if on the edge of a precipice. The dowager hesitated.

"We see very few people, Mr. Dudley. Since Margaret has persisted in this—work, I

prefer that no one should come. You have been very kind. Will you be here long?"

"A few more days."

"We would be glad to see you before you go," answered the dowager, with that gracious dignity of hers.

"Margaret," said the dowager, in a most direct fashion, after the door closed on the knightly form, "let me congratulate you. Two days have wrought wonders. We might have the Callands to dinner, if other excitements fail you."

"Oh, you can't scold worth anything! You know you liked him. He is nice. I've only known him a little

while, and see how—I like him."

"He may be the embodiment of the seven cardinal virtues for all I know. But really, dear, isn't it a little unusual—this whole thing?"

"Very," mumbled the impeached sovereign; "it is unaccountable, disgraceful, foolish—but nice."

"I am thankful it was he."



Before Dudley, bewildered and amazed, could stand up, the Queen of Hearts had vanished.

"Then you *do* like him."

"Of course. But don't get it into that frizzled pate of yours that he is madly in love on two days' acquaintance—or with a tinsel queen."

The queen's mouth drooped wistfully.

"I wish I were a real one."

"What next? And even tinsel queens must sleep. One more thing: Why, how, and wherefore have you deceived this man into thinking that the wig is your own golden hair? That you are the proud owner of that mass of curls? Can't you see the trouble it will lead to?"

"See it?" groaned the queen. "See it? I can fairly taste it—but it can't be helped. He just took it so for granted that I had yellow hair that I couldn't ruin his digestion and my own by contradicting the fact. But what does it matter? I shall never see him again. He'll forget it, and there's an end."

"Ofttimes, the end is but the beginning," said the dowager, whose eagle eye foresaw trouble from just such a course.

"Bother! Am I not queen?" And the council adjourned.

Arthur Dudley, walking over to his hotel, felt his sense of curiosity roused. She was an odd little creature, evidently the best of breeding; you could tell that from the mater. But why was she in that awful booth with that creature called "Mudie," who so kindly explained her present, past, and future to him?

The dowager spoke truly when she said that men like Dudley did not fall in love with tinsel queens. But he was interested, amused, touched. He saw it all—the pathos of the little home, the effort being made to keep it bright. After thirty-five years of an indifferent, decidedly conventional routine of living, he had been made to feel something quite foreign to his general viewpoint by a little white-satin figure, with big, blue eyes, and a wealth of golden hair. His heart had beat foolishly, as he caught her that one, brief moment.

"Dud, my boy, I've got to look after

you," he told himself, as he turned in for the night, and viewed with chagrin one long, golden hair, which he had pulled off his coat shoulder yesterday, and carefully laid on the dresser.

When the queen was alone in her room, she looked carefully at herself in the glass. That hair—those frizzes and masses—what a remarkable change in the girl proper it made! The whole face was animated. The eyes became a deep violet, the cheeks tinted, and the dimples deep and effective. She quite approved of it. It would have suited her to go to bed, remembering just such a picture. But there were times when the queen was painfully honest.

Slowly she took off the glorious headgear, and looked again. Could it be the same girl? The dimples had vanished; the eyes were gray, big, staring, bleak, like a sea after a storm, when night is closing in. The face was oval—not round and plump—and the hair plain, dull, brown, straight. It made a nun, a nurse, a mother out of her. The other brought visions of gay times, of flirtations, and frivolities.

She looked at the wig tenderly, whispering softly: "And he said: 'Without it, your reign would fail you.'"

CHAPTER III.

Three happy days followed for the queen. The next afternoon, Arthur Dudley found himself at the card booth, admiring and staring at the Queen of Hearts. He found himself walking home with the selfsame little lady each of the three evenings, and enthusiastically talking to her, telling her—how did he ever come to do it?—of his plans and ambitions, his school days, and Dudley, and his mother's death, and all she had meant to him. He caught himself up on the last—this child with violet eyes and yellow curls could hardly be expected to divine such feelings. Yet he told her, and she, half laughingly, half fearfully, told him little sweet-breathed stories of her own life.

And they talked books, and fought over which was better—"Vanity Fair" or "David Copperfield," and whether

Beethoven was more human than Grieg. They even ventured into politics, and quarreled over the suffrage question.

Dudley looked down, and thought how charming this same person would be, if the red blots or rouge were gone, and only the true pink remained. He used to feel a helpless sort of rage every time he watched the crowds staring at her, commenting, laughing carelessly at the remarks overheard.

But the best of the three days is not told. After all their arguments, the queen and her knight came home to the palace, where the dowager received them with her own special Sunday smile. And the dowager and Sir Arthur would talk earnestly, and agree ardently on things over which the queen never puzzled her head. So the sovereign would nod her flaxen head drowsily, and feel as though the cares of state were slipping from her.

And the knight would read himself a lecture something like this:

"Dud, this has got to stop. You've stacks of work ahead. It's a good thing the Bardon affair has a hearing Thursday. But, by Jove, she gave me a good argument on reincarnation and the Rajah Loga theory. Who'd ever think it? And Peggy—she's—she's——" Here he would think of Dudley house and the quiet, sleepy village, and: "Confound it, past my block again!"

Meantime the dowager commanded the queen not to favor her new knight strongly. She reminded her of the many queens who came to grief through favoring certain subjects. The queen would assent mournfully, and creep off to bed to think of the first day at the fair, and the last talk with Sir Arthur, and the funny crowd, and Mrs. Pete's new shirt waist—and the yellow wig!

Very much happened in the next two months. First, Sir Arthur went away; he left abruptly, almost brusquely, as though trying to persuade himself that he was a loyal Yankee, with nothing but contempt for royalties.

The queen wondered whether she would see him again. Why should she—any more than some of the endless mob which stared at her daily?

The day Dudley went was unusually warm and long. The walk to the dressing room seemed magically shortened, with Sir Arthur by her side. His good-bys were impersonal, indefinite, and the queen hated herself for wanting to cry.

When six o'clock came, after a suffocating, maddening day, the queen left off her golden wig, telling Mrs. Calland that her head was tired from wearing it.

"You do look fallow," pensively remarked Mrs. Calland, "without it. There's some rouge behind the left ear, Mag."

The queen acknowledged the rouge, and made her exit. All alone—no knight to come close beside her, to stand between her and the mob. There was the gaudy midway, the smells of stale beer and greasy sausages and French candies, and the stench from the animal show. She shuddered as she scurried along. How had she ever missed feeling this tainted atmosphere? She did not know that the film was gone, and she and the world were walking arm in arm.

The dowager realized the sad state of affairs, but maintained a diplomatic silence. Not the slightest allusion to a certain person was made, and she calmly read fashion notes and a bit of Kipling to a thoroughly bored and fretful majesty.

The missing knight, at that identical moment, was sitting in his comfortable living room, relating his experiences to his Cousin Anna.

"There was one thing at the fair that was great. A card booth, gaudy and all that—and a Queen of Hearts. She was a little girl, dressed in slimsy satin, chalked face, red gloves, and lots of imitation truck. She posed as wax. The way she did it was great. Had the most beautiful hair I ever saw. Spun gold would tarnish beside it. And a childishly pretty face. The first day she tried it, I was there. Imagine all those horribly curious persons, peering at you. She was afraid to wink or breathe—wax, that was what she was supposed to be."

"There she stood on the veranda of one of the buildings—little, pretty,

frightened. She'd kept them guessing for two hours, and she couldn't hold out another minute. So over she swayed, and I, as usual, butted in and caught her, just in time to make the mob believe she was unbalanced wax, instead of a quivering bunch of nerves. The people she is with are the worst ever—Mudie and Pete by name. I was awfully interested in her, and got to know her rather well. Has a fine mother."

"Really, Arthur," said his Cousin Anna, noted for her housekeeping, "such an interest and enthusiasm over a little show creature are unusual. Did she melt your heart, and add it to her store?"

"Don't be rough on a fellow, Anna. You'd have done the same."

"By all means. With such an opportunity. A painted lay figure in a playing-card booth."

So the little tinsel queen was dropped from the conversation, and, yes, it must be admitted, half neglected, half disgraced!

It is a peculiar feeling to hate pleasure and pleasure seekers because you have to contribute to their enjoyment. Waxen as she seemed, the queen grew to despise these transients.

There were days when Mrs. Calland would pour her confidences into the queen's ear, and sob madly over the golden wig, and call upon Heaven to witness the injustice done her. There were days when she would fairly transform herself into ice, and be sad and melancholy. And it was on these days that Mr. Calland had attempted following the queen home, or had sent her in a little lunch in the dressing room, or forgot to tell Mrs. C. that she was a winner.

There was Mac—the queer, cynical chap in charge of an arts and crafts exhibit. He was the only one in the building who knew the queen. Somehow she and Mac were fated to know each other, from the time she bumped into him in the narrow hallway, and almost demolished his glasses. He always kept his weather eye open for the queen's comfort. He cheered her up when she was

blue, and dampened her spirits if she was too enthusiastic. He walked beside her, when she took her mechanical airing, keeping even Mrs. Pete under control.

It was soon evident that it was from one to six o'clock that the queen must pose, and yet her salary remained the same. Perhaps she thought very often of Sir Arthur, for she was thinner, and the rouge was quite needed to place the roses in her cheeks.

As for Sir Arthur, he did not think any too often of her majesty. A new hunting dog, a house party at his cousins', and a rush of business—it was rarely that he remembered the girl with yellow hair. Then came a telegram calling him to the exposition—a matter of an hour's business. Yet he packed his suit case, and suddenly remembered that he had promised to send the queen souvenir cards.

He arrived at the fair grounds about three o'clock, having completed his business affairs nicely. He made a direct cut to the card booth. Yes, there it was—the same, ornate article. And the queen. Paler, even the rouge looked ghastly, and she was thinner, and the eyes—the eyes were good to look at. She had not seen him yet. Heavens, how could she turn her head back and forth every other minute, and breathe, and wink, and fan, and—

The queen's head had throbbed incessantly all afternoon. Mrs. Pete had been telling her that "some people wouldn't be so thick with a model"; she had fairly pushed Mr. Calland from her path; they owed her two weeks' salary, and another was due that night. The heat was suffocating. Things hung in limp dejection about her throne. A provoking lump kept rising in her throat. Yes, she must turn her head again now. Left to right, now wink, breathe, fan, turn—she saw Arthur Dudley. He stood close to the railing, as tall and powerful-looking as ever. He was staring at her—like all the rest. The color rushed into her face, her fan dropped from her hands, and the waxen, sawdust Queen of Hearts burst into tears!

The crowd gave a howl of satisfaction.

"She's alive!"

"She's feeling blue!"

"Cheer her up!"

"Don't take it so hard now!"

Mrs. Pete was hurriedly putting up a tall screen around the throne.

"Jump down, you fool!" she whispered.

The queen jumped, and, hiding her face in the satin folds, she cried as though a revolution had taken place, and she was on her way to the guillotine.

Mrs. Pete stood coldly by.

"Why couldn't you have fainted, if you had to cut up cold? Crying gives it dead away. What was eating you, anyhow?"

"Heat," answered the queen.

Mrs. Pete gave her a searching glance. Perhaps something in the girl's face touched a certain spot near her heart, for she was not altogether invulnerable. At any rate, she stopped asking questions.

"You'd better go home, I guess. Just walk right out to the dressing room."

The queen did so, and breathed a sigh of relief when the door closed and she was alone. She scrambled the rouge boxes together and collected the bits of chamois and stray hairpins.

To-night she deliberately pinned the yellow wig on her brown head, although other evenings it had been placed on the wooden headrest with a sense of glad relief.

Mac tapped at the door—the queen knew his knock.

"Come in and scold me, Mac. I need it."

"Scold? What's the use? Never does any good. You need a nap and a new novel. See here, queenie, I've always kept an eye on you, and I intend to. That is, until you and I part on our own particular, thorny little paths. I think I have earned that right."

"You know you have."

"Thanks. Now for the point. Who's Arthur Dudley?"

The queen's face flushed.

"A man," she answered.

"Play your ace."

"W-ell, he's a lawyer, a man I met the first day I posed here, a man who thinks this wig is my own hair, a man whose family would think I were eternally damned. He has three dogs and two horses, hates the midway, tips the waiter with all the change, does not part his hair in the middle—and a man, Mac, that I like."

"Your kingdom is threatened. Oh, but you're a weak little sovereign! Here's his message."

The queen took a card from Mac's hand eagerly. It read:

YOUR GRACIOUS MAJESTY: May I wait on you at the North Garden? A. D.

The queen's cheeks were rosy red—her headache gone. She felt Mac's steady gaze, and looked up in confusion.

"Oh, I read it," he assured her. "I wouldn't have brought it to you if I hadn't. I liked him, too, queenie. Don't keep him waiting."

The queen scampered, she scarcely remembered to say good night. Mac stood in the middle of the little dressing room, and smiled.

"There is going to be trouble from the hair question, I can feel it. And he's not a man to trifle; if he was, he'd be through by now—after my talking-to."

Chief in the list of Dudley's feelings, when the queen had burst into tears, were amazement, helplessness, and a sense of guilt. He had waited until the screen went up, and the queen down, and the crowd drifted away. He wondered vaguely what to do. See her—of course—but how? Some infinite tact told him not to go to the dressing room, and to avoid the booth. To wait at the door for her was rather on the stage-Johnny order. He would send in a note—by whom? The pages had a wicked glitter in their eye, and Bill was too much occupied with his uniform. He realized that the queen wouldn't stay behind the screen forever, and that his presence might call forth another outburst.

As he strolled away, he saw Mac. The queen had told him about Mac. So the wandering knight took a chance,



Clumsily breaking glasses as he tried to wipe them.

and, after a short and pointed confab, Mac had taken the note, refused a cigar, and was on his way to the queen.

Dudley, waiting in the North Garden, was wondering why he should be so infatuated. He had begged a stranger to take her in a card. Why had he stopped at all to see her? A "painted show creature," his Cousin Anna had said. What would Anna say? What would all Dudley say?—a child, a spoiled child—yes, a tinsel queen! He turned his head, just in time to see the queen rounding the corner breathlessly.

"Your majesty."

"Sir Arthur." How young and childish! A tinsel queen? Never! She was every bit sterling.

"Please, what was the matter? Tell me all about it. Surely I, your loyal subject, have the right to know? Are the affairs of state very bad, or do you want arbitration and the other side war? Or have——"

"Heat," replied the queen laconically.

Dudley flicked the ash from his cigar.

"Please tell the truth, it saves time. More convenient in the end. Unless you happen to have a thirty-two caliber memory, being a fibster is dangerous."

"Then I shall say it was you," replied the queen quickly.

"That isn't fair, because I was innocence itself. I was quietly admiring the pretty wax doll, when lo, it breaketh, and the sawdust runneth out; the wax melteth, and pursueth a course like unto tears. Lo, the hour is come!"

"You are maudlin. I always thought queens were, but now I see where they get it from—contaminated in no time by court favorites. Well, I shall tell you. It was the heat, and a headache, and mother isn't well, and Mrs. Pete was unusually crowded with temperament, and—there were lots of things—but it was the heat—truly. Are you back for sight-

seeing?" she finished wistfully.

"Business—that is quite completed. I intend to stay on a bit, and do some more roughing it. But you aren't well—you're pale and at a tension. When can you stop this work?"

"Not for two more months, anyway. I made a contract for the remainder of the fair, and I've been here only six weeks."

"You can never stand it. But never mind that now. Your mother isn't well?"

"Not very. You see, she worries about me, and I worry about her, and there it is. Besides, she ought to get away from all this heat. It is especially bad where we are."

"Would she like a row to-night?"

"Hardly."

"Why?"

"Because."

"No valid reason. I'll see her myself. Let's go to dinner first. Aren't you even hungry?"

"Not very—but I'll try. May we go to that German affair? It looks tempting."

Again dining with him, talking to him, being in his care—what did it all mean?

Gone were the repugnant odors of the midway, the offensive signs and hated people. Truly, it was a beautiful place, a lane of mirth from beginning to end. The Japanese acrobats seemed like guardian angels, and the women in Darkest Africa resembled goddesses. And one tall, rather thin man had created this glorious, joyous place merely by his presence. All for one little girl, who clung to his arm, as she skipped along, smiling happily at the world—a tiny girl with violet eyes and daffodil hair.

"Your souvenir cards were so pretty," said the queen sarcastically.

"Please forgive me. Let's eat an ice-cream cone to drown our sorrows."

Even the greasy Greek boy smiled as he watched the queen's dimples. Nectar and ambrosia were but breakfast foods in comparison. And the cheap little restaurant, the tip-seeking waiter, the cracked plates, the worn silver, the wonderful, fearful orchestra, to say nothing of the show people—they all combined to form a fairyland.

The cheap shabbiness did not escape Arthur Dudley for a moment. But the salad was good, and his dinner companion charming, so he felt both entertained and benevolent. He leaned back to examine her at close range. He vaguely saw his Cousin Anna sitting beside the queen, and scrutinizing those curls, which were rather noticeable. He wished she were a little truant from a convent, instead of a nerve-shaken model. But why be serious? A good time to-night, and to-morrow will take heed of itself. Her eyes were glorious, her hair superb; good manners, too—only a bit nervous. And she had cried from merely looking at him. Could it be—

"You are not hungry, your majesty."

"Too warm to eat, Sir Arthur."

"Quite right. I am too busy paying silent homage."

"Don't," said the queen suddenly.

"Why not? A cat may look at a king."

"Don't." It was a stern command.

"How can I help it?"

"Let me do the talking."

"With pleasure. But am I to be allowed to gaze?"

The queen's lips quivered.

"By all means," she said bitterly, "but you must listen, too. I want you to stop giving me those scented, left-over compliments. They are like French bonbons, too highly perfumed to be healthy. You say such things to a married woman whose husband is away indefinitely, or to an actress whom you forbid your wife and sisters seeing. Oh, yes, I'm talking—I warned you I should."

"I know just what you are thinking—indeed, I do. You are thinking that this is quite surprising for one so young and lowly, and that it is quite too bad that I am so placed in life as to have to do this sort of thing. And you are glad that my hair is yellow, because you like to look at it; but if it were brown or gray you would refuse to know me at all. I won't give you a chance to answer, because I said I was going to talk."

"And I met you like any chorus girl would, and was dining with you inside of twenty-four hours, and I liked you, yes, admired you, because you were the first real man I ever met. And I know now you thought me cheap and common. And you went home to the town named for your grandfather, and told about the wonders of the fair, and brought proper souvenirs to the family, and congratulated yourself on having made the trip in so short a time, and you thanked Heaven you had your own cook and morning paper."

"You would no more introduce me to your friends than you would give a house party for the waiters here. Perhaps you wouldn't cut me, utterly slash me, you know; but you just wouldn't have seen me—which hurts more. And were some one from Dudley to come in here now, your digestion would be ruined for weeks to come, and the sight of salad would recall memories most painful. Yes, I'm finished."

And before Dudley, bewildered and amazed, could stand up, the Queen of Hearts had vanished!

He rushed to the door; the crowds were pouring in and out.

"My check," he said to the waiter; "and my hat."

"There's a locket, suh; the young lady dropped it."

"Hurry!" He clutched it eagerly. The old-fashioned locket she had worn when he met her in the crowd that first night.

He stepped outside. It was dusk; the people moved slowly along, thousands of them. Strange, conglomerate sounds of music floated past him. Not a golden head in sight! He opened the locket remorsefully. It made him wince.

Poor child, how had she ever gotten things so tangled up? How earnest she was! But it was not at all deserved. He had liked her for her own self.

What was he to do? If he stayed away he was a willful thief. The locket lay in his hand. Besides, he wanted to see her; he wanted very, very much to see her, and tell her—No, he wouldn't go home until he had seen her. By George, it was more than that—he liked her, he *loved* her!

"Dud, old chap, you've done it," he gulped. "You're in love, and it was the worst laying out in your life that did it. They say whip a dog, and back it comes. Guess it's sure enough. And she, oh, she must love me. She does—she must! Cousin Anna go hang—I'm in love. Like a reuben that goes to the county fair, and becomes entangled in the coils of a snake charmer. Hip—hi——" He remembered the trembling lips, and the words: "You wouldn't cut me, utterly slash, you know—but you just wouldn't see me."

The cheer died on his lips, and he began to elbow his way through the crowd.

He is coming, your majesty, right to the royal palace. Poor, dethroned queen, who has tried so hard to uphold her power. Even while you lie, your dark-brown head hidden deep in the dowager's lap, and the sunbeam wig in a disfigured heap on the floor—he is coming. For he is the only court doc-

tor in the world who will ever prescribe successfully for your pain!

CHAPTER IV.

Finally, the queen lifted her head, and choked out a good night. The doorbell rang impatiently. The dowager rose slowly to answer it. The queen, with a queer, light-hearted feeling, crept to her room, but left the door open. She knew the voice, and they were saying—why couldn't she hear the rest? The dowager was coming to her room.

"Margaret, Mr. Dudley is here. Will you see him?"

"No—I—I can't."

"Very well. Only please remember hereafter to take your wig with you. I had a parlor game of football to prevent Mr. Dudley's stepping squarely upon the Julia Marlowe curl. Good night."

The queen promptly crept to the door to listen. For conspirators are common, unless you watch them carefully. But not one word could she catch. Clever dowager, she had shut the dining-room door tightly, and the queen, weary of waiting, fell asleep.

The dowager extracted the golden wig from between the bookcase and the divan, and smiled happily. She poked back all the loose wig pins, and re-braided a stray lock. For Dudley had told her that he loved the Queen of Hearts, and that he would merely wait until the proper time came in which to tell her.

Dudley walked quickly along, his thoughts keeping step. In love—in—love—in—love! Yes, he was; he had said so. He was quite sure of it. She was such a child, and her mother had pointed out that fact to him. What made him such easy prey? Margaret—no, Peggy suited her better—Peggy in Dudley town! Would she fit into the surroundings? What would the people say? What would she do in the old-fashioned house?

He sauntered to his room, and began to undress. He opened the window, and looked out at the quiet night. The

thought of "Just Her" came to him; and Dudley, with all its prejudices and ready criticisms, was forgotten. Only the picture of a little girl remained—a little girl with yellow hair.

What passed between the queen and the dowager, and the dowager and Sir Arthur, are state secrets, and not to be revealed by the court secretary. But the queen went back to her waxen pose in a happy frame of mind, and the dowager kissed her good-by cheerfully.

When six o'clock came, the queen knew he would be waiting for her in the North Garden. At least, that was what he had told the dowager to tell her.

Mac watched the girl tenderly.

"North Garden, queenie?" he asked. She pressed his arm ever so slightly, as they stalked along before the mob.

"Looks pretty serious, queenie."

Again the gentle pressure of the wax figure's arm.

At the North Garden gate he stood waiting.

"Am I to be entirely forgiven?"

The sound of his voice made every drop of blood rush into her cheeks.

"Entirely."

"And you will not take away my order of knighthood?"

"It—it was never really taken away."

"Ah, only threatened."

"Yes."

"And you'll promise to dine with me, and not run away?"

"Really, truly."

"Thanks. But I shall keep fast hold of you to make sure. Can't take any chances."

The queen felt herself tucked securely under his arm. They walked once more down the dusty, noisy way over to the little restaurant. Straight to a certain table—cracked plates, dingy silver and all. Enter the same waiter, and up goes the curtain on scene two.

"When do you restore lost property?" queried the queen, as she poised a bit of rarebit in air.

"When I see that you don't run away again—something like a truant prize," answered Dudley, deftly leaning forward to steal a bit of rarebit, and enjoy it immensely.

"Greedy creature! Well, I shall work hard, and win the prize, even if it requires superhuman effort. And now I am going to tell you something. Don't be frightened; I won't give you an artist's proof of last evening's round-up."

"Wait a minute," whispered Dudley earnestly. "Tell me—do you think I deserved it all—do you? I am afraid I shall be the one to talk to-night. But tell me, did I deserve it?"

"No," admitted the queen; "not all of it. Perhaps you didn't deserve any of it. Only, at the time, it seemed as though you did."

"I'll make you say you deserved it more than I did before we are through," he bragged. "And now for court scandal."

The queen chattered on, telling of the crowds, the Callands, the pages, Bill, Mac—all the rest of her happenings. And he told her of Dudley, and dwelt faithfully on the dear narrowness of the town, and how much it meant to him.

Dinner was over; the queen was quiet.

"I told your mother we were going canoeing," he said.

The queen had a happy feeling inside, though she tried to deny it to herself.

And canoeing they went. He paddled; so did she. He talked; she listened; she laughed, and threw back the masses of golden curls, and he forgot to talk. The paddle grew a bit heavy, and he assumed command. A tired, sleepy sovereign was handed over to her dowager, and her knight walked home once more to think, and muse, and speculate.

A telegram reached Cousin Anna the next day, saying:

Won't be home until further notice—detained indefinitely. A. D.

There were dozens of walks, and talks, and drives, and canoe trips. And a dinner or so at the salon royal with the dowager presiding, and Sir Arthur clumsily breaking glasses as he tried to wipe them. There were parties at the theater, three in attendance, and trips to the fair, just as though one didn't work there in the daytime, and have a free pass. Books were read and dis-

cussed, and boxes of violets haunted the royal palace. Boxes of candies, too, and magazines galore. Yes, Sir Arthur's business was most important. Such times! And through it all, the queen would think of that awful day when she would have to relinquish her golden hair; and Sir Arthur would feel a bit guilty as he thought of waiting business and Cousin Anna.

While the dowager appeared cheerful, she proposed to the queen that she present her lightning-change hair act as soon as possible. She even commanded it; but the variable will of a ruler was not to be reckoned with, and the queen was quite determined in this act of self-indulgence. Her work, Mac, the Calands—all seemed far away and unimportant. But all things must end, and one sunshiny morning the knight rode on to duty, and the queen was left unprotected.

She did not feel as lonesome as hitherto. Although she felt a depressed, sinking feeling as she watched Dudley vanish into the crowd, yet there came the strong thought: "He'll come back—to tell you."

Dudley had become more deeply entangled than ever. And he watched for the queen's golden head, as much as she for his rough tweed coat. He felt the absurdity of it at times. He wished it could go on like this forever, or else that he wake up and find it had been a delicious, never-to-be-forgotten dream. But it was painfully real, so back home he went, determined to see it through.

Not a word of love had been spoken. That was the beauty of it. Perhaps he half hoped that this charming child and himself might forget one another, and come to think of it in after years as "something that happened at the exposition."

Regular letters from Sir Arthur came to the queen; and soon the dowager had the pleasant sensation of never having to hear the mailman pass her door. Pictures, volumes of poetry, and odd trinkets found their way to the queen from her knight, and the queen devoted her leisure hours to answering the letters with delightful redundancy.

And when the queen and the dowager were having a heart-to-heart talk in the council chamber, the queen would open her old-fashioned locket and see—the dowager's dear face on one side, and on the other hitherto empty space a man's face, whose eyes seemed to look into one's heart and smile at what he found written there.

At this psychological moment, the dowager would look at the queen, and the queen would try to avoid the look. But the dowager would gently raise one curl of the yellow wig off the queen's head, and say: "Peggy, when?" And the queen would shake her head free, and declare: "Never!"

Perhaps Arthur Dudley worried more about being in love than the queen worried about the state of her own affections. The former had committed himself openly to the dowager. He read of love, talked of love, thought about it, and became enamored of the quality; but he had yet to feel the slightest scorch of the flame beyond an imaginary conflagration caused by a sense of pity. He tried to recall his exact sentiments, which he so assuredly labeled as love. But they were Open and Shut Sesame to him.

Autumn was close at hand. The queen still busied herself answering letters from Dudley; visions of yellow hair were still in vogue; and the love which Arthur Dudley had so hoped for had not materialized.

One coolish evening, like the level-headed Yankee he was, Dudley took a long walk through the woods to think it out for himself. Conscience reproached him for the overtures he had made. Common sense told him: "Tell the truth—you don't love her; you never can. It was an unfortunate incident from the start. A feeling of pity for a child, dangerously old. Suppose you bring her home to rule over the old house, like a kitten commanding the kennels; amusing at first, but pitifully lacking in the end. And the hair will fade, and her eyes grow heavy, and in ten years' time she will be a washed-out, insipid doll-child. Tell her mother the truth; she will understand. Tell her it is all



"The firm had come on."

impossible, improbable, and that you have made a mistake. The child is young—she will forget—and in six months' time she will have to think to remember your name."

He would take the next train to the exposition, see the dowager, and have it done with.

And while Sir Arthur plans his court call, the queen has gone to her room for the night, has pulled off the wig regretfully, and has opened the old-fashioned locket. She looks at the picture, and whispers softly: "I love you—I love you!"

CHAPTER V.

According to history textbooks, one must have a clear understanding of the political and social conditions leading up to the crisis of a kingdom. We must see clearly what troubles the queen had been subjected to. It all came about in this manner: Mrs. Pete had an attack of temperament, which had serious re-

sults. And the queen was guileless enough to ask for her salary, which had not been paid her since the time the visiting knight had last appeared on the scene.

This flamed the temperament into a mighty fire. Salary! To demand salary, as though she wasn't willing to wait until she got it handed to her—as though they would beat her out of it. Salary!

The truth of the matter was that Mrs. Pete had been given the queen's salary some time ago, but she had lost the greater part of it by trusting to a tip, given her by a bookmaker. This was a sore memory, and her temperament mounted high.

"But I need the money," protested her majesty, "need it badly." It did seem unjust—to work so hard for it, and then be blamed for merely asking for it. "You see, it has been due me for five weeks, and my car fare—"

"Dry up? Are you afraid I'm going

to cheat you out of it? Maybe you think I'm supporting a working girls' home on it—maybe you do. Maybe you think I've made away with it."

The queen's eyes were imperial.

"Perhaps you have," she said sweetly. "I'm going to find out."

Mrs. Pete's yellow skin turned a shade less yellow. Sweetness—icy, subtle sweetness—is a bad signal.

The queen said good night in a pleasantly unpleasant manner. She even picked up Mrs. Pete's handkerchief, and dusted off the dressing table with it before she gave it to her. Mrs. Pete smiled smugly, as she dusted her nose with the rabbit's paw and indulged in an eye-opener, which she kept in a mysterious black bottle.

Then the queen marched back to the booth, and told her little trouble to Mr. Pete in the most straightforward manner possible. And straightway there was an explosion which equaled the giant firecracker that imperiled the queen's hand last summer.

"I've given her the money every week; she's been playing the ponies again. Why the—— Here, queenie, girl, here's some on account, and I'll settle, honor bright, to-morrow. I'll settle with the old un first. She's hell sometimes. And see here"—his voice dropped to a confidential whisper—"you come to me if you're ever short on postage-stamp money—what I've got is yours—and you can open my mail any day you want."

The queen drew back in disgust. She wished she had remained silent.

"Thank you," she said. "I take only what I earn."

Mr. Pete waved his fat little hand at her in farewell. The queen smiled—he was really so ridiculous. Just then Mrs. Pete came in sight, and saw the little byplay. Then she heard her husband's pleasant greeting of: "Hello, Hetty Green! How's your old side kick, Cassie Chadwick? Give back that money——"

The revolution had begun. Mrs. Pete could not freeze and become a cake of ice, like the heroines she so admired. After she was sufficiently frozen, she

placed herself within the reach of red-hot temperament, and sputtered, and cracked, and melted until her force, either as a volcano or an iceberg, was useless.

But from that moment on, the queen had a most unpleasant time. Mrs. Pete lost no opportunity to humiliate, even insult, her. Moreover, the elder woman's jealousy grew and grew. Calland could scarcely look at the queen without Mrs. Pete's anger flaming forth. And the poor queen's life was well-nigh insupportable. She grew naturally very bitter toward Mrs. Pete, and longed for some chance to get even with her.

Late one afternoon, four men walked up to the booth; one spit carelessly over the side railing, and all commented on the queen. Her majesty's color rose underneath its outer coating. Where was Mr. Pete? Generally such proceedings were stopped, even though he did likewise himself. Mrs. Pete was all smiles. She shook hands, and gushed accordingly. And the queen, with a leaden feeling in her heart, knew that the much-talked-of event was happening. "The firm had come on."

The president, his secretary, the business manager, and the chief clerk—there they were. One tall, repulsive-looking, his yellow teeth gleamed like fangs when he laughed, and his eyes bulged. This was the secretary. The president was short and fat, almost dwarflike. The business manager was a tiny, ratlike man, with gray hair and small, glistening eyes. And the chief clerk's face was dissipated and shallow. Neither were his eyes good to look at. The firm—the wonderful, all-powerful firm, on whose decision rested whether Mr. Pete would receive fifteen hundred or sixteen hundred during the coming year. The queen's posing almost ceased.

The firm spent the afternoon in the booth, smoking, laughing, talking. Accordingly, Mrs. Pete ogled, and flirted, and coughed, and sighed. The queen took a new lease on life, and held the crowds spellbound—for the firm had come! The firm, collectively and individually, looked at the queen, and at

the crowds, and at the queen again, and began to take a fatherly interest in her.

"Is she real, Calland?" panted the president, as he deposited his plug hat on the floor, and lit another cigar.

"Real as Mudie there," answered Mr. Pete nervously.

"Oh, she's real," volunteered Mrs. Pete. "She's *real*—live with her a week and make her up, and you'll know."

The queen winked, breathed, turned; the smoke was in her eyes, and the stale air made her head ache.

"We'll have her out to dinner to-night?" quoth he of the rat eyes. "See if her appetite's waxy."

Mrs. Pete's eyes snapped. To dinner—have her to dinner—have her admired and attract attention! The queen heard it, and her head whirled dizzily.

"Dinner at the Mexican village, where they have the girls in short yellow dresses, and then a trip down the midway besides." The president was feeling young again. Surely, there is magic in yellow curls.

"That's the line of talk," said Mr. Pete. "Dinner with the queen and Mrs. C."

"Mrs. Calland—of course," assented the firm hastily.

"I don't go with no chorus girl," snapped that lady, "but this is special, and I ain't stuck up. If Pete's along I don't care—but I don't think she'll go—she may have a date."

The firm roared.

"Popular, too?" said the tall, wolflike individual.

And still the queen winked, and breathed, and turned, and fanned.

At six o'clock Mr. Pete helped the queen from her throne.

"The president's gone on you," he whispered.

She did not answer. Mac walked with her to the dressing room.

"Pretty tough lot," he said, "especially the tall chap. You look tired. Get to bed early."

Mrs. Pete closed the dressing-room door cautiously.

"Now, Mag, I want to tell you for your own good that going out with the firm ain't the thing to do. It's different

with me. Pete will be one of the firm some day. But you're a sort of half actress, and it looks bad. I'll even lie for you, and say you have a date—see?"

"You needn't," said the queen, with heightened color, "because I am going to go. You're jealous—that is all that is the trouble. You are afraid of my having ever so small a share of attention from such men as these. But for once I am going to overstep your authority. I am going to dinner with the firm!"

Hot-headed little queen—some victories are worse than a defeat. They leave your power so weakened that it would have been better to surrender gracefully. But with the smell of powder in the air, the queen dashed into battle.

"You ain't going with me," shrieked Mrs. Pete.

"You never asked me," retorted the queen. "I am going with the firm." And she made a low, sweeping curtsy.

When the queen was dressed in her white piqué suit, the blue sailor perched on the mass of golden hair, she left the dressing room, calling back sweetly: "See you at dinner."

Then she walked in the direction of the booth. Mac stopped her.

"The firm have done me the honor to ask me to dinner, Mac, and Mrs. Pete declares I shan't accept. I say I shall. Tell me I am gaining in military tactics."

The queen waited archly for his approval.

"Come on, queenie. I'll take you home. The peroxide in the wig has turned your brain."

"Mac—I mean to go."

"With that crowd of rowdies—that miserable, unprincipled set of men? Queenie, I'm disappointed."

"I mean it—good-by."

"Queenie!" Mac hurt her arm as he grasped it. "Listen, I tell you *not* to go. Your mother—Heaven knows I'm not trying to take her place—but in this she would agree with me. It is the most foolish bit of childish bravado possible. Don't even hint that you ever thought of it."

But the queen was willful.

"Let go my arm. I'm going."

"If Arthur Dudley asked you not to go—what would you do?"

The queen murmured: "Go."

Mac's tone was brutally rough.

"Then you'll go with your eyes wide open. I've told you—you ought to know yourself—you're not the sovereign I thought you."

He turned on his heel, and left her. She had a frightened longing to call out to Mac, and tell him to take her home. But his tone had been too decided. She flew to the nearest telephone to tell her mother an incoherent statement of "Be home by nine—she was all right—good-by."

Mr. Pete and the firm leaped to their feet as she came in.

"Queenie, my dear, allow me—Mr. Murray, the president; Mr. Curtis, the secretary; Mr. Jones, the business manager; and Mr. Scofield, the general good fellow. The queen, gentlemen—the Queen of Hearts, and I'll warrant she has yours all safe and sound by now."

"No mistake."

"Gone hours ago."

"Wish I had another to offer for the good cause."

"Aren't there any returns in this deal?"

"The queen's the boss in this deal. Where's Mrs. Pete?"

"She's coming," faltered the queen.

The president pushed up beside her.

"You didn't have no date to break, did you?" he whispered.

"No," she answered, drawing back. She wondered how far away Mac was. Mrs. Pete had come into the booth.

"I'm never busy when the firm wants me," said the queen recklessly.

The firm applauded lustily. Mrs. Pete glared at the queen; Mr. Pete caught the byplay. He hastily proposed dinner. So the queen, escorted on one side by the president and treasurer, and on the other by the secretary and head clerk, started. Mr. and Mrs. Calland followed submissively. At this time, Sir Arthur was nearing the station.

There followed a noisy, indigestible dinner, eaten amid cheers, and whoops,

and poking the waitress in the ribs, and calling loudly for drinks, and patting the queen familiarly on the head, and stealing her food from her plate, and upsetting her glass of water to refill it with beer, and flattering Mrs. Pete.

They were in a small, private dining room, with flamboyant red curtains and pots of artificial palms. And the paying of the bill came only by demanding a kiss from the waitress.

The queen tried to slip away and come back to Mac, to beg his pardon and his escort home. But the blood-shot eyes of the president spied her, and caught by his short, fat arm, she was made to stay, while the others shouted for glee, and danced about her madly. Mrs. Pete smiled at her, and the passers-by hurried their wives and sisters along, and the head waiter tapped the queen on the shoulder as they were leaving, and said: "Come again, sweetheart."

The crowd swept her along. The jokes grew broader, and the laughing more boisterous. The queen tried to leave them again. They were in a beer garden, the third since dinner, but she was pulled down with brutal insolence.

Back to the midway the gang went, the firm trying to walk with their arms about her. The queen's white face, and her large, frightened eyes made the tourists turn to look after her. She begged and pleaded to be let go, and she thought of her mother, whom she had told not to worry.

The clock struck nine, and they straggled up and down, in one beer garden and out again—one side show—another.

At half past ten they were still on the march. The secretary added a French candymaker to the party, and Mrs. Pete's tones were thick and muffled. A policeman followed them. Oh, the dowager, the dowager! Another beer garden—another side show. The head clerk smothered the queen in cigarette smoke, and blew a tin horn in her ear every other moment.

She could not think distinctly now; the president pulled her roughly along.

Suddenly, the queen saw a tall, thin figure—a glimpse of a face and a rough

coat sleeve. She tried to scream. But he had vanished.

Perhaps it was all a rude, wild dream, which she could tell the dowager soon. Could she walk another step, bear another meaning glance from the departing sight-seers? Another beer garden, another halt—another small room—more wine—the French candymaker sang a song, and the men tried to clap, and couldn't. A policeman came in to look about. The queen no longer resisted the president's arms. Her hands were like ice, and her head was burning.

The party went on—all but the girl and the president. The queen blinked stupidly. Why wasn't she with them? The president was close beside her.

"You——" he began.

The queen gave one last cry for help. And a tall, thin man in rough tweed opened the door!

Poor, fat president, he was only a subordinate power. He dropped under the table and slept nicely until morning. And the terrified girl was in the arms of the tall, thin man.

"How—how did you find me?"

"I found you because I love you—I love you—do you hear, you foolish little Queen of Hearts?" Then to the waiter: "A taxicab."

Arthur Dudley had rushed posthaste to the dowager, in hopes of finding her alone. Then there would be no need of seeing the queen, or of her knowing that he had come. But he found a most worried sort of dowager, who hinted at dreadful things which might happen to the queen. After talking to her for ten minutes, he found that to tell her that he no longer loved Peggy would be quite impossible.

When half past nine came, and still no Peggy, the dowager was visibly distressed. The deserting knight put on his armor, and started out to look for the queen. The dowager had so taken things for granted. It was an awkward situation. Having come on to break off his understanding with her mother, and not even to see the lady in question—here he was, rushing forth to find her.

The booth was dark, the dressing room locked, and the entire building deserted. For two hours he walked feverishly up and down the midway, haunted by nonsensical fears—for her hair was golden, and her eyes were blue. A ray of hope came in the sight of Mac, who was walking almost as fast, in an opposite direction.

Mac told him what had happened.

"And she's somewhere, being mobbed about with that crowd," he finished. "Find her if it takes all night."

Dudley's throat tightened, and his hands clenched hard, as he listened to Mac's story. He thanked him, and hurried on. In cafés and out of them—through the narrow streets of miniature foreign cities—out again—up, down, back, forth; he leaned against the pillar of a side show to collect his wits. He remembered Mac's earnestness and the dowager's face. He was up and at it again. The midway was fast being deserted; only straggling groups of persons wandered about. Just ahead, he saw Mrs. Pete, and the firm, and the show girls, dancing, yelling, stumbling about—but no golden-haired, frightened queen beside them. Ah, they had just come out of the door on the left. He dashed in breathlessly. He heard the queen's cry for help!

Riding home, the queen lay quietly, a great happiness within her heart. Her golden head rested on her true knight's shoulder. Dudley sat quietly, too. For the glad, happy feeling of love had not come back, yet he must ever pretend its glad presence near him.

He placed her in the dowager's arms, and said good night. The game was cast!

CHAPTER VI.

When the queen opened her eyes the next day, the little clock beside her pointed to half past twelve. It seemed as though she could sleep until the clock hands crossed themselves many times. She turned over drowsily. Looking down at her left hand, hitherto unadorned, she saw the quaint betrothal ring which Arthur Dudley's mother had worn. It was all so changed! There

would never be another hour spent in the dressing room, another afternoon on her throne. The troubled reign was ended.

The antique ring hung on the queen's small finger—one large, pink topaz set in dull gold. On the inside was a tiny locket, opening by a spring. Here were entwined the initials of faithful lovers. The spring snapped back solemnly. Engaged — married — married — engaged.



The queen gave one last cry for help. And a tall, thin man in rough tweed opened the door!

The thought overwhelmed her. The little clock seemed to tick furiously:

"Hair is wrong—hair is wrong!"

The queen looked at the long, brown braids—so hateful. Her golden wig sat pertly on one corner of her dressing table. And he never even dreamed of such a deception!

The dowager tapped gently at the door.

"Oh, mother!" was all the queen said.

"My little girl!" answered the dowager.

And then came a few moments when

the conversation seemed positively inspired. Presently, the dowager pointed to the wig, and, laying her hand on the brown head, said: "When?"

And the queen buried the same brown head in the pillows, and answered: "Never!"

"But this is absurd, my child," urged her mother. "The Queen of Hearts is no more. This wig is not even yours by right of purchase, much less natural."

"Then I'll get another one, or I'll buy this. I can't let him know. Why, he adores it—it was what made him first start to care."

"I grant you it is awkward, but surely Mr. Dudley loves you—not your hair."

"But it's the hair that brings the love, like the water that makes the flowers grow. The seeds are there, you know, but they have to be watered, that's all."

"Perhaps we can try irrigation," suggested the dowager.

The queen gave an odd little chuckle. After all, things did seem good.

Dudley called for the queen at two o'clock. He was grave, almost serious; one could scarcely accuse him of maudlin sentimentality. The dowager's face was gravely content, as she saw the queen take his arm and start for their farewell trip to the fair. The dowager was undergoing mental tortures as to what should happen if the Callands would not allow the queen to accept the wig instead of her salary, and should literally snatch her golden crown from her. But the queen had been so sure that it would be all right; and the dowager had reason to have faith.

The queen's suffering had whipped Arthur Dudley into action as nothing else could have done. The man in him was paramount—the lover, lacking. So he stifled a sigh, and wondered whether, when the yellow hair had lost its bright-

ness, and the childish voice changed to a fretful whine, if he could still play the part cast for him—and do it justice.

As the queen opened the dressing-room door, a feeling of ownership came over her. It had been hers, after all. Mrs. Calland looked up at her in sullen anger.

"Busting up the show?" she said.

"I am not going to pose any more," said the queen gently, "not even if I have to pay you all the rest of my salary—which, by the way, you can't make me do. I'm not going to be angry with you, either. Perhaps you would be different if you had had the chance. It's all over, and you needn't ever be jealous again. And last night"—her voice was a bit harder—"is over, too, and can't ever come back."

The queen paused. She thought she had come halfway.

As she looked at Mrs. Calland, her pity grew. Old, exhausted by her own attitude toward others—worthless. The greasy black hair was stringing down her back, the eyes were red and haggard, and her cheeks marked with tears, which wore off the strips of rouge.

"Mag," she said, slowly pushing the hair from her face, "I never thought you'd show up here again. I didn't think you'd ever come around unless it was with a shotgun. I know I ain't been square, but you don't know what it is to worship a man—worship him, I say, and then have every fresh face that comes in the way make him drop you cold. And that ain't the worst. It's been *him* that's made your face wrinkled and worn out, and when you try to look the same you can't—oh, you can't!"

The queen put her hand on her shoulder.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Yes, but it's too late—it's too late. It's the time when feeling sorry don't count—and you don't know, Mag—you don't know!"

"I do know a little," said the queen soberly. "I do worship a man. I'm going to marry him, but I'm not really happy. Listen, it's a funny story, but you'll understand. He saw me here as

the Queen of Hearts the very first day I posed. And he saw me again and again until he loved me! Think of the wonderfulness of it—he loved me. But he always saw me with this wig on, and he thinks—it is—my own. I have never told him differently. It's too late now, because it was the hair he loved first. And I want to ask you if you will let the salary go, and let me have my wig instead. See, I'm trusting you with all this—you could go outside, because he came with me, and tell him the truth. But you won't—you won't—will you?"

The spark of divine fire, with which we are all accredited, ignited. Mrs. Calland rose to the occasion.

"Say, I wish you all best, Mag. But getting married ain't the easiest thing on the program card. Only it's—right."

And the queen's eyes saw, for the first time, the other's left hand, which wore no wedding ring. A sudden flood of understanding, accounting for many things, came over her.

The greasy black strands were being pinned up nervously.

"Keep the wig, if you want to," she said. "It does look swell on you, and I'm sorry it ain't your own. But I guess you can fool him, if you want to. They ain't such an awfully sharp lot, about some things. I look dippy to-day, and I've got the blues. No, I won't say good-by, Mag. I'll just wish you good luck. If I had the spare silver I'd buy you a make-up set that would make Lillian Russell look like a Irish wash-woman. I wish you'd write me—send it in care the company—I'd like to know when it happens. And forget—all the things that happened, Mag; they weren't nothing much, when you come to add them all up. The firm raised Mr. C. two hundred a year on the strength of the Queen of Hearts. Good-by—I hope the man is sterling, all wool and a yard wide. Good-by—good-by."

"And is your Cousin Anna very strict?"

The queen was sitting on the arm of Dudley's chair, her head reposing on the aforementioned's coat sleeve.

Dudley twisted uneasily about. "Not painfully so; but she's old-fashioned and conventional, and I do hope you will like her."

"Of course," she chattered on, "and I'll have to be quiet and demure, and all that—won't I?"

Again the uneasy twist in his chair.

"Dudley is not an excessively lively place, Margaret, but you really won't be on inspection, like visiting day at a young ladies' seminary."

Peggy's eyes opened wide.

"I never said I should," she pouted, "and mother will adore it."

Dudley's brow cleared. At least he could count on the dowager.

The talks were no longer satisfying to either. There were brief snatches of argument, patched up with generalities, and here and there a few shreds of lovers' language. And Peggy was left in wild despair as to the outcome of her hair; and Dudley was in despondent thoughts regarding Cousin Anna's reception of his bride. He was reconciled to his lack of ardent love. That was over and done with; but the criticisms, comments—

Dudley started home again, laughing rather bitterly as he thought of the inverted solution he had worked out to his problem. He left a glad-eyed little girl with a pink ring, and yellow hair, waving to him at the station.

It was November—a month after his arrival home. The pink ring was still on the small third finger, and the mail between Dudley and the queen's home city had been heavily increased.

Dudley wondered what might have happened if he had been only three feet farther west on a certain memorable day, when a certain small person was unreasonable enough to become faint. Three feet would have saved the day. And he could be reading "Vanity Fair," and toasting his heels in comfort. Only yesterday Cousin Anna said that he was an ideal bachelor, and he agreed with her absent-mindedly, while guiltily conscious that a thick, unopened letter in the queen's handwriting was reposing in his inner pocket.

He opened the letter critically, analyzing every line. It was like the queen—scrawls, commas, exclamation marks, postscripts without end, and big, irregular capitals. She told about the close of the fair, and how she was getting "lots fatter," and there was such a funny family moved across the street, and how she was going to keep house alone while her mother had a vacation. She asked about the dogs, and thanked him for Cousin Anna's message—Dudley squirmed—and then came the closing paragraph:

It is late, and I must stop. I know you are busy, but your letters are so short, and I am such a spoiled sovereign. Isn't it all wonderful—you and I? I love to say the words over and over to myself—you and I. Then I think of all that is to come, and I wonder, and plan, and dream. Do you? It is hardly fair to ask, is it? So I shall count the question answered. Good night. Remember that forever and a day I am
YOUR LASSIE.

He folded up the pages methodically. "Your Lassie!" The last bore more weight than all the other words she had ever written. The perfect, trustful surrender, the assurance of his right of ownership, the confidence in his love for her—who could dispel it now?

He walked over to the portrait of his mother, painted when a bride. Her dark, mystic eyes, the piles of dusky, silken hair, the tender, human mouth—all looked down at him, as if to say: "My son must play the laddie."

Her pink ring, painted with such skill on the tapering finger, had been the outward pledge of true love and happiness—could he use it to symbolize such a mixture of emotions as he had created?

The stern face of his father scrutinized him from the other side.

"You must never keep a lassie waiting," it told him.

Dudley sat down, and, with quick, rapid strokes, penned a letter to the waiting Lassie. And the last paragraph ran:

If my letters have been short I have been more than busy. And letters are unsatisfactory sort of things, after all—they really say so little. Margaret, if you are still willing to abide by our rather hasty decision, I am ready to fulfill the conditions at any time.

The sooner the better. Would the New Year be too early?

Here his pen paused. He meant to write "Your Laddie," but instead he wrote, as calmly as though it were a receipt, "Arthur Dudley."

Thank Heaven, it was done! He would stop wondering. Within ten minutes a telegram was in his hands calling him to Burnett on business—a town sixty miles away.

CHAPTER VII.

The queen waved a last farewell to the dowager. She wiped her eyes on a popcorn ball, and started for home. A big slice out of something was gone. But the dowager needed a rest, and the queen could make both fudge and seven different chafing-dish recipes—and she had her pink ring.

She ran up the steps briskly. She put her hand in the mail box. Yes, a letter with the Dudley postmark—not a very fat one, but a letter.

She tore open the letter, and read rapidly. The weather—the town meeting—the new library—oh, why was he so like a collection of statistics? The last novel—the proper inquiries about the dowager's trip, and then—the closing paragraph!

There was no mistake; the words were clearly, plainly written:

Our hasty decision—I am ready at any time to fulfill the conditions!

How could he have written it? The pink ring pressed deep into her flesh. And her last letter—her cheeks burned as she remembered it—it had been so foolish, and had taken all the new joy and pleasure so for granted. She had never dreamed of—yet this letter, what else could it mean?

What should she do? The dowager was gone, and she couldn't write it in a letter. Alone, bewildered, too hurt to act sensibly, the queen suddenly made up her mind.

She put the golden wig in her suit case. She took a dark suit and hat, some blouses, and a few necessities. She closed the suit case with a spiteful little snap.

Then she closed up the flat, picked up the letter, and read it again—just to be sure it was not a cruel joke.

"Yes," she told herself, "it is the only way."

It had been only an hour since she left the noisy railroad station. She had skipped home promising herself a cozy evening, in which she would read over all her letters again. She felt the madness of her resolution, but a sore spot near her heart kept throbbing: "Go and tell him the truth; go and show him the wig, and tell him he was——"

"Ticket to Dudley," she told the man.

"Return?"

"Return? Oh, yes, of course—return."

She put the ticket in her purse, and counted her change mechanically.

"Train going east!"

The queen picked up her suit case. She hesitated a moment, the rashness of her act impressing her.

"Track number nine, lady." The queen dashed ahead.

The lights were not on in the car, and she settled back in her plush seat to think. The starting jolt of the wheels roused her. Black things passed her—faster, faster until they whizzed by. The porter sauntered through, and lit the lamps.

The queen braced herself in the seat, straightened her hat, and even smiled as she thought of the startling transformation she could accomplish by transferring the contents of her suit case to her head.

It would be nearly six hours before Dudley would be reached; six hours of jolting, and jostling, and listening to the sick baby cry, and watching the lights appear and disappear in different towns and hamlets. Six hours of asking herself why she was doing this impulsive, unheard-of thing, of wondering what the dowager would say, and of planning what she would do when she reached Dudley in the middle of the night.

The train came to a dead stop. The traveling man picked himself up, and began to curse the road. The square-jawed lady with the baby swathed herself in yards of black, knitted scarfs.

The conductor's good-natured face appeared at the door.

"All change here—wait for the next car—trouble on the road."

Two maiden ladies followed him, chatting nervously. The traveling man lurched behind. The woman and the baby, an old man and the queen—all the others filed out. It was a dismal country station, and the waylaid passengers sat uneasily on the bare board benches. The queen stared at the rows of fly-specked novels. Her eye mechanically read the circus poster of last season, and she saw the doughnuts piled on a red napkin, and the hard, weather-baked sandwiches, and the girl with bright-red lips and black hair, who was serving the traveling man with a cup of coffee.

At last the conductor appeared, and announced the new train. There was a frantic rush for seats. Once more they started on their rocky way, the misty rain penetrating through the cracks and corners of the windows. The train slowed up at Burnett. The queen was thinking of the little flat and the dowager, and how she was going to tell—"This way in!" shouted the conductor.

A woman all in black sank into the first empty seat. An old lady and her tall son followed. A crowd of theatrical people stumbled along. Then came a tall, thin man, who sat down across the aisle from her, and buried himself in a magazine.

He gave a hasty glance at the queen, and turned away. She put her hand up to her throat—the lamps flickered—it might be only a striking resemblance. No, there was no mistake. Suppose he should look up suddenly, and see her, and stand up and say, before them all:

"You lied to me—your hair is brown—you wore a wig!"

The queen clung to her seat in despair. The conductor came for Dudley's ticket. He handed it out without speaking. The queen's suit case fell to the floor with a bang.

Dudley stooped forward.

"Allow me," he said courteously.

Her lips moved—she tried to grasp the handle, but down it went again.

He picked it up carelessly, remarking: "Jolts some, doesn't it?"

Still no answer. Dudley gave her a quick, searching glance. Her white face and frightened gray eyes surprised him.

"Must be ill," he thought, as he lifted his hat.

He yawned, looked at his watch, and at the outside moving blackness, went into the smoker, came back, and listened to the chorus girls singing "Afraid to Go Home in the Dark." Occasionally he glanced at his pale companion.

It seemed as though the queen must go to him, and say: "Here I am. I am going to tell you now, instead of waiting. I can take the next train home, and it will be all through with."

The mouth looked stern, and the eyes seemed to say, as he glanced at her: "You are a pretender to the throne."

Or should she put on the wig and pretend—*what* could she pretend? Her pink ring pressed hard against her fingers. She might get off at the next station, and hand him the wig and a note, explaining all. If he looked at her again, she would say—

The queen opened her eyes. A thin streak of light was in the sky. People were running all about. Oh, yes—the rain, and the sick baby, and the chorus girls, and Arthur—it came back to her. "A bad wreck!" she heard some one say. She remembered the terrific jolt and lurch, and the crash following. She stared about. Big rails and pieces of twisted iron bolts lay near her. The genial conductor stared up at the morning dawn with cold, vacant eyes. The two old ladies sat under a tree, weeping copiously. One of the chorus girls was crying, and another was lying in her lap. The traveling man was walking up and down, talking excitedly about his samples. The country people peered curiously about. A doctor was working hard over the tall boy, while his small, aged mother sat silently by on a twisted rail.

The sky was getting brighter now. The queen felt something warm in her own arms. Looking down, she found the sick baby cuddled close. An arm of the square-jawed mother protruded

from a pile of lumber. The baby gave a happy gurgle. And as to Arthur—she dared not guess. Perhaps she might never have to tell him; the pink ring and the golden wig would be hers for always.

A cry caught her ear:

"A man is in the car—Mr. Dudley, the lawyer! Who'll help him out? God, don't let him die like a dog!"

The people murmured hesitatingly. One man started toward the car.

"It'll take two," came the call. "There ain't no time. The wreck's on fire!"

"Be you awake?" asked the woman harshly.

"Yes—and rested. Tell me all about it, please."

A gleam of importance came into the woman's eyes.

"The doctor says you ain't to know nothing. There ain't nothing the matter with you except nerves—and you ain't to know nothing."

Ah, he was dead then.

"But I'm not at all nervous—not a bit. See, I'm well." She sat upright. "And I must know—I——"

The woman hesitated.



"Yours is the face of a woman. This is an insipid little doll, like the picture on a box of bonbons."

The queen rose unsteadily, the baby in her arms.

"Take me with you," she began, and then some one caught her and held her.

She struggled—they didn't understand—he was burning, burning. She saw the traveling man, with a ghastly cut in his head, jump over the twisted track, an ax in his hand. The cheers of the people and the smell of wet wood burning made her dizzy. The little baby gurgled happily.

This time she found herself in a big, plain room. There was a table, and a rocking chair, and a woman sitting in the chair knitting stockings. The patchwork quilt on the bed made her eyes dance.

"If there's anything particular——"

"Arthur Dudley—the man in the burning car—where is he?"

"Downstairs, asleep. My, but you look relieved!"

"Go on, go on! Is he badly hurt?"

"I hadn't ought to tell you——"

The queen sprang out of bed.

"I tell you I am well, there is nothing the matter—a little cold from exposure, and nervousness from the shock. I am as able to help nurse as you are. I am going downstairs."

"No, you ain't. You stay here where you be, or the doctor'll say I ain't no nurse."

"But you are—the best ever. Don't you see how you've cured me? I'm so well I'm cross."

The woman was undecided.

"You look white, but I guess you're coming on all right, if you can talk like that. I suppose you'll have to have clothes—there's a nurse's dress in the press downstairs—the doctor brought it for me, but I can't get halfway into it."

The queen was pulling off her tattered waist. She smiled at the woman.

"You don't know how good it is to be alive," she said. "I've felt this way once before, and it's *good*. It's worth all that comes before. Now tell me where I am, and who you are, and all about the wreck."

"I'm Josephine Skinner, the practical village nurse," began the stern-looking woman, whose wisps of gray hair were twisted into a forbidding knot. "I reckon this house is the hospital at present. Anyhow, they brought you, and Mr. Dudley, and the engineer—there was two killed, and one died an hour ago. That was the big, tall boy. His ma's taking it hard. All the rest have been taken somewhere else. The two old ladies are setting in my parlor on my sofa, and writing letters on my table." Her face softened an instant, as she added: "The baby's mother weren't hurt bad, either."

"I held the baby in my arms," answered the queen, as she piled the long brown braids on top her head. "My name is—Mar—I mean Marion Craddock. I'm a nurse. That is, I was taking a hospital course, and was obliged to stop because of family reasons. You see, I can't help but feel an interest in Mr. Dudley's case. It is fortunate I'm here to relieve you. Can you tell me the name of the town?"

"Collines. So you're a nurse. I never had no training, but I guess they all know the way to this house when something's gone wrong. Yes, you're welcome to help. I didn't relish the job. Mr. Dudley's will be a two-week case, anyhow. The accident was because of the carelessness of them fellows—ran right off the track, and dumped you all in the grade crossing. You was on the right side, so you fell out; Mr. Dudley was opposite to you, and he was penned in."

"Was any baggage saved?" The queen remembered what was in her suit case.

"There were the traveling man's trunks. Mr. Dudley's suit case was split open, and there was another one with an M. B. on it."

"Mine," said the queen.

"Them ain't your initials."

"My aunt's suit case," she flashed back. "It was old, and brown, and had a loose strap. Her name was Burton. It had an alligator tag, and here's the key."

"Guess it's coming to you. I'll bring it up. Don't fluff your hair—I hate it." And the vision vanished.

Arthur Dudley downstairs—unconscious, hurt—and she just above, in a prim nurse's costume, ready to nurse him and make him— Yes, it was coming out all right. The pink ring was slipped off, and hidden securely.

It was half past five. She opened the window, and looked out on the gray fall fields and deep russet foliage. The cows were being driven home away in the distance, and a farm wagon, laden with fruit, wound in and out of the bare, brown hills, kissed by the sunset. Life was good. If the dowager were with her, nothing more could be desired. A cup of broth brought the color to her face. Even Josephine Skinner's face seemed illumined in the gathering dusk.

In the suit case lay the golden wig, as fresh and well groomed as though it had merely made an extra trip to the hairdresser. All the shock and confusion had failed to displace as much as a hairpin. The queen thought of the traveling man, as he leaped across the logs, the blood streaming from his face, of the baby and the conductor, and—

She resolutely put away her thoughts, and went into the kitchen. Miss Skinner was majestically making broth!

"You don't look bad," she said, "but the doctor'll be here in a little while, and he'll want to see you. I don't want him to think I'm making sick folks work. So you can set in the parlor, and keep company with them that's there. Try and get 'em to set on the wooden chairs," she pleaded.

A country best room! The hair wreath, the horsehair "set," the family Bible, and the china lamp, giving out a feeble glow. The two little ladies were nervously sliding from one end of the sofa to the other. In all of their sixty years no such happening had ever before jarred them.

"We thought you were quite dead, my dear," they quavered.

"Don't think anything more about it," said the queen, sitting down beside them, feeling very old and experienced. "You are all shivery. Get some broth."

The little ladies were timid. But the queen led them into the kitchen, and managed Miss Skinner to the extent that the broth and her best preserves were spread out before them. She slipped back to the best room, and scribbled a twelve-page letter to the dowager, who, let it be hoped, was surrounded by friends, when she read it. The queen explained the situation without glossing over any of the details. She impressed upon the dowager that she must not worry, and to send her mail to Miss Marion Craddock.

She sealed the letter when the doctor came into the room.

"An ambitious patient," he remarked.

"A well one," she answered. "Would you mail it for me?"

"With pleasure. Miss Skinner tells me you're a nurse."

"Going to be in three years. I hope you will let me help."

"Um—steady yourself, please. Your name?"

"Burton—oh—I mean Craddock."

The doctor read the address on the letter. He smiled at the queen.

"They say anything goes in an accident," he remarked sagely. "Mean-time, I'll start you in winding bandages and such for Mr. Dudley."

An odor of disinfectants came from Dudley's room. On a chair were the remains of a once imported tweed coat. The queen brushed past the doctor. The lamp threw the thin, set face into good relief. A bandage was across the forehead. She forgot the doctor's observing eye.

"Do you know this man?" he asked.

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"I never saw him before," she answered glibly.

"Indeed! Always keep your professional instincts of kindness, and your success is assured. Watch him carefully until he awakes. Then give him —" And he placed a few simple directions on a card.

"Doze yourself on the lounge. You look pale enough. And no more changes of name before morning. Good night."

And the grizzled head of the doctor was withdrawn. The lamp flickered and sputtered, and the sick man groaned softly. The queen sank down beside the bed, and cried for joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A-ah!" The pain was sharp. The queen flew to his side. His eyes were open—unintelligent. The queen slipped the bandage back deftly. The eyes closed again, and he slept. All through the long night the girl kept vigil, scarcely closing her own eyes for a moment. At five Dudley was conscious. His nurse was beside him at his slightest stir.

"Hurt much?" he mumbled.

"Not badly—all right in a few days."

He tried to nod contentedly, but the pain made him moan instead. The queen's cool little hand rubbed his forehead.

Josephine Skinner took her place at seven o'clock, and the queen slept feverishly until noon. Then she was back at his side again. He was conscious, restless. She slipped her hand over his forehead. He looked at her in a puzzled way.

"You were the one last night?" he said.

"Yes," answered the queen.

"You—you were the pale little passenger—your suit case fell?"

"Yes," she told him. "But you mustn't talk."

The eyes looked at her sharply, and the queen's hand shook as she poured out some medicine.

"Have you sent word to Dudley?"

"Yes—I told them not to worry."

Her patient was asleep.

For two days and nights the queen kept a jealous watch over her patient. There was no acute danger—merely a question of time and care. The queen had received an upbraiding, thoroughly maternal note of protest from the dowager, who told her in no uncertain terms that she was sure that the yellow wig had turned her brain. However, the dowager, true to her court training, promised to “keep mum,” and try and not worry.

On the fourth day Dudley began to play the rôle of invalid. Hitherto he was merely a victim of the wreck—one of the injured. Four days' sleep and growth of beard work wonders. He sat upright, and demanded a beefsteak. Miss Skinner was in attendance at the time.

“I've had my orders,” she snapped, “and I ain't the one to break 'em. Maybe the other nurse will be jollied into it.”

Then she departed in high dudgeon.

Dudley tossed restlessly about. The worst of the pain over, he was irritable and weak. Laid up at a God-forsaken country town, with a broken arm and a cut head. The Queen of Hearts flashed across his mind for the first time, and his temperature was steadily on the rise. That letter—yes, he had actually sent it—to marry her and settle down. Why hadn't they sent his mail on? Oh, that awful woman with the long face! The other nurse, the pale-faced little passenger, she would get it for him. He pulled at the bell furiously.

Marion Craddock, nurse, answered. It was pleasant to look at her. Dudley stared impudently at the slender little figure in white, with the kerchief crossed about her neck. Her serious gray eyes and heavy braids of brown hair pleased him.

“Can you tell me where my mail is? Has it been sent on?”

“I'll see the doctor about it,” she answered, her heart beating loudly.

“Won't you sit down? I feel horribly like talking.”

“You're rather feverish, Mr. Dudley, but I'll stay for a moment or two.”

She pulled down a shade, and sat beside the bed.

“Sit where I can see you,” he commanded, with the tyrannical air of an invalid.

She obeyed meekly.

“What shall I talk about?”

“Yourself,” was the answer.

The queen arched her eyebrows, and told him a long, serious story about the advisability of taking up a government claim in northern Oregon. Dudley watched her closely as she talked; he liked the way her color came and went, and the almost blue-black eyebrows and lashes.

“Thanks,” he drawled, as she finished. “I know I was rude.”

The queen artfully turned the subject to the exposition, asking him if he had been there, whether such things appealed to him, and so on.

His forehead wrinkled at the mention of it. As if the very mention of the exposition did not turn him from a sane business man into a foolish child of fortune.

“I'm actually tired of the subject,” he said briefly. “I went several times, but it didn't interest me—not in the least.”

His nurse took the hint. So they talked of the weather and Miss Skinner; and the queen told him about hospital training—cribbed from half a dozen novels on the subject—and Dudley told her about his home, and the queen listened as though she had never heard of such a place before.

Dudley watched her longingly.

“I can't associate you with nursing, and hard, unattractive work,” said Dudley.

The queen looked wistful. “There is nothing else for me to do,” she sighed. Oh, your majesty!

They talked until the time for the drops was quite forgotten, and the sun was way overhead. And the Queen of Hearts was completely forgotten, ignored. Her crown was indeed a tinsel one.

The queen took a peep at her yellow wig, and wrote the dowager another coherent and hair-raising account of the affair. All next day she was chief en-

tertainers to the invalid. Far into the night, when the ache in the arm would not let him sleep, she told him fairy stories rivaling the "Arabian Nights."

A terrifying letter was received from Cousin Anna, who, being laid up with rheumatism, was unable to rush on and rescue Arthur bodily. Dudley gained steadily. In three more days he was sitting up, always insisting that the queen be beside him. Miss Skinner drew aloof from the room, and devoted herself entirely to the nursing of the sick engineer.

It was a rainy afternoon, and the queen had amused Dudley without pause. It did seem as if even Arthur might sleep. He was asking her something now, but her eyes were closing.

"You're dead tired," he said abruptly, "all because of waiting on me. I'm a selfish pig, a miserable sinner. I've never given a thought to your comfort before."

The queen smiled.

"I'm used to it," she protested.

"No, you're not—you never can be. See here, you can't be a nurse. You're like a story-book nurse, a fairy nurse. Your face is——"

"I hope you're not delirious," said the queen. "But, speaking of faces, do you think a face ever tells things?"

"Yes," he said, thinking of a girl with round cheeks and yellow hair.

"What does my face tell?" she demanded childishly.

"It says that you are meant for a home, a wife, a mother. It is—a wonderful face," he finished boldly.

The queen looked out the window.

"Thank you," she murmured.

"Please, I'm not jesting. You have hair like my mother. Here—just to show the difference between your face and some one's else, look in the back of my watch."

The queen knew whose picture lay there. It seemed as though she would snatch it away, should he analyze and criticize that diabolical doll mask of her own self. A fierce love for it possessed her. But she opened the watch coolly. There it lay—a little snapshot taken one day in the North Garden. The face

seemed plump and rosy, the eyes bright and flirtatious. The curled and puffed wig sat effectively on her head. She did not wonder that he had not recognized her. Yet she resented his tone. So this was his true attitude.

"Well?" she asked. "What is the difference?"

Arthur looked at the watch picture, and then at the girl beside him.

"Difference? See for yourself. Yours is the face of a woman, a helper, a thinker. This is an insipid little doll, like the picture on a box of bonbons."

The queen did not answer.

"Surely you agree?"

She laid the watch back on the table.

"No," she said.

"Why, there is no comparison," said her patient irritably. "Perhaps you wonder why I carry that in my watch?"

"One naturally would, after your remarks," said his nurse dryly.

"She is a charming little girl—a plaything that is apt to run down without warning. Her hair is too bright, and the eyes seem uncertain."

"Then it is merely amusement which makes you friends?"

"No. I became involved—when it was too late. I wish you might know her. She is a Dickens' Dora; you are the Agnes."

"It is time for your broth."

"You'll bring it back?"

"Yes," she answered, without turning her head.

When she was in the hall, she stopped to laugh and cry, all together. "Childish, a plaything—involved when it was too late." Oh! And the former queen wished with all her heart that she had been wax.

Miss Skinner brought up the broth, with the remark that there was no more salt in the house, and he couldn't have pepper.

"Where's Miss Craddock?" he demanded rudely.

"Gone to bed."

"Is she tired?"

"I didn't ask her. I ain't taking care of more than a dozen people."

"I should hope not. Good night."

Dudley tossed restlessly about. He



"See, dear, it was a wig—this 'too-bright hair'—that really kept us apart."

wondered why she had not returned with the broth. Was she displeased at his remarks? Was it bad taste to upbraid the queen so scathingly? He opened the watch again. The same baby face laughed back at him. No depth, no meaning—he thought of *her* face, with the dark, smooth hair, and great, gray eyes. And yet, there was a resemblance—remote—unreasonable, and still a look of the little queen herself.

He had it. *She* was the idealized version of the queen. The night lamp threw dismal shadows about the room. He couldn't sleep. Why hadn't she come back—why hadn't she come back? He couldn't sleep, and he loved her, and he could never marry her. Never! He was going to marry the Queen of Hearts, the tinsel queen. She had the pink ring, and he had promised; he was going to marry her, and watch the yellow hair grow streaked with gray. And Marion Craddock would go out of his life, and he must never see her any more.

If his mail would only come, and he

could learn whether Margaret was willing! Margaret—Marion—they should change names. He did not know this girl's mother, but the dowager's true daughter would seem like her. Ah, he had it! She looked like the picture in the dowager's sitting room, the little girl with brown braids. He loved her so. But it was the Queen of Hearts—he—must—marry. And Dudley slept.

Not so with his nurse. Her majesty tossed long into the midnight hours. To find that he would tell a stranger about her, to find that he considered himself "involved"! She did not realize that he had blindly discovered an overwhelming similarity between the two women, and that her own true self was what he loved. His ideal was realized, and the very moment she took off her wig and borrowed the dowager's hairbrush, her insipid, toylke little self vanished.

Allowances must be made for Dudley. He must be reinstated on his pedestal. Weakened by the wreck, irritable, and impatient with himself, it had been an unlucky chance that made him

openly denounce the queen. And then his nurse, who understood intuitively every move to make, confused him more.

He was glad this girl Marion did not care for him. If she did, she would suffer, too. No, she was too cold to love a sick man, whom she nursed for a few days.

The queen rose light-heartedly.

"I go by contraries," she told herself, as she let the toast burn.

Dudley was awake when she came in. He did not wait for her good morning.

"Why didn't you come back last night?"

"I was abominably sleepy. Did you want anything?"

"Only you. Never mind—it's another day now. And salt at last."

The queen opened the window.

"Glorious," she murmured.

"You speak like a little girl shut in for the day."

She did not answer.

"I believe you want a tramp through the woods."

"Wizard!" said the girl, breathing in the fresh, crisp air. "How did you ever suspect?"

"By the way that tantalizing curl on your left temple waves. As the fairy godmothers used to say: 'You shall have it, my child.'"

"Nonsense! You need watching yet."

"I promise to pay Miss Skinner a compliment every three minutes, if you'll go."

"Really?"

"Truly—cross my heart, and all the rest; please bring me a bit of the woods when you return, and tell me all about it."

"I'll recite realms. Perhaps I shall find a fairy guide."

The girl's face was aglow, and the man longed to go beside her.

"Good-by," she said brightly.

"Miss—Marion—I want to ask you something. Do you remember last night, when we were speaking about the picture of the little girl, the one in the back of my watch?" The queen nodded. "It must have been the last poultice that

made me say what I did. I didn't mean it to be quite as cutting. She doesn't deserve it. I care a great deal—about—her, and—"

"You will remember," said the queen, as she unwound some fresh gauze, "that I did not agree with you as to the picture. It never is policy to argue with a patient. But it did seem to me that the picture showed merely an undeveloped face—that was all. Of the possibilities, neither you nor I can judge."

A satisfied look came into his face.

"Undeveloped—it explains it. If you only knew her you would understand."

A breeze blew the queen's hair across her forehead, and she laughed. Dudley started. Where was it he had heard that laugh?

"Good-by, 'wood wisp." And the light and sunshine of the room seemed to follow her.

When the doctor made his call, he remarked:

"You'll be up for good in a day or so."

"Can't I try it to-day?"

"Better wait for Nurse Marion."

"She's out for a ramble; been close confinement, and new work for her at that."

"She's a good nurse for a probationer."

"Good!" Arthur suddenly realized that the doctor was looking at him intently.

"You never knew her before?" asked the doctor, remembering the expression on her face when she first saw her patient.

"Not in this world, except that I picked up her suit case on the train. You don't know anything more about her?"

"Never heard of her. She said her mother was South, and that she wanted to be a nurse; but she'll never stand it."

"Just what I tell her. I wish you'd add your word."

"Add it for me. It'll have more weight." And the doctor smiled.

When that much-discussed little person burst into the room, Dudley could not but think it was the Queen of Hearts herself. There was a bright

pink in her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled merrily; only the sunshiny hair was needed.

"Won't you tell me the charm?" he begged. "You must have found the fairies and the fountain of perpetual joy."

"If you could only have gone! It seemed glorified a hundred times. I suppose it's because I haven't been out lately." She tossed a handful of red leaves on the bed. "Look at them! Aren't they wonderful?"

Together they examined them, while the queen told of the nooks and cunning hiding places she had found.

"I shall send you out to report every day," he promised. "The medic says I shall be up for keeps very soon."

"I'm so glad. It must have been hateful for you. I never could have been as patient."

"You win by a good many points."

"But I could do things. It's much worse to lie and have to endure them. To-morrow, did the doctor say? Then I can go Thursday."

Dudley's heart sank. He knew it was wrong to willfully retain her. But, like a child fingering an expensive toy on a store counter, he refused to give it up until the shopkeeper should take it and place it back in the case.

In the late afternoon she brought in his mail. A letter from the dowager, written according to strict orders, lay underneath.

"Read them to me?" he asked.

There were business reports, and letters of solicitation, and one from Cousin Anna, who praised the nurse's work, and asked him if he could not come home soon. Also suggesting that he bring the nurse with him.

This the queen folded up without comment. Dudley looked at her eagerly. She picked up the last letter, and read it through quickly:

MY DEAR ARTHUR: Your letter came to Margaret some days ago, and I have neglected answering. She has been quite ill, and it has taken all of my spare time. Your letter lies unopened on her desk; it will be the first pleasant surprise for her when she is well.

Don't worry. It is nothing but a cold and

general run-down condition. Are you well? Write her again, and do not worry.

Sincerely,
MARGARET BURTON.

The queen was guiltily conscious of a rough draft of that exact letter lying upstairs in her letter case. She had practically bullied the dowager into coming home, and writing it. And the dowager, reduced to absolute submission, had obeyed.

A pause followed. Then Dudley burst forth:

"Margaret is the girl whose picture I showed you. I am going to marry her some day."

"I thought so," said his nurse.

"Why?"

"From the way you found fault with her."

"But—I—love her," he protested weakly.

"No," said the queen, looking straight at him. "You do not."

Dudley's forehead took on distressing wrinkles. His desire to protect the queen to the woman he really loved, and his wanting to tell her the truth, made the contest keen.

After another moment, he said hopelessly:

"No; I don't love her."

"And you are going to marry her?"

"She loves me," he pleaded.

"Will her love do for both? It can't flourish on barren soil, and when it dies the stalks are ugly."

"It's too late to draw back. Can't you see from the letter that they don't dream the truth? It would be caddish to tell her! Barbarous!"

"Refined cruelty may not be as forceful, but it lasts longer."

"You can't understand. It's too late."

The queen tore off a tiny edge of the letter.

"Then you must never let her dream the truth."

"I'll try."

"To let her know would be the deepest wrong one person could do another. You must deny the truth to your own self."

"Perhaps; these last few days have been so perfect, even with the pain—"

Do you mind my asking you what you are going to do?"

The queen walked over to the window to watch the sunshine dance in spots on the brown earth.

"I am going to marry," she said.

Dudley clutched the arms of the chair.

"Whom?" he whispered.

"A man I love, naturally," she told him.

"Tell me, do you love him?" he demanded.

"With all my heart."

The light in her eyes told him his case was useless.

"I hope he's—he's good enough for you."

The queen shook her head sadly.

"I do not think he even loves me," she said slowly; "he has caused me more pain than any one else in all the world; perhaps I love him all the more, because suffering begets love. That is all."

"What sort of brute is he?" asked Dudley harshly. "What sort of man that doesn't worship you? It's a mistake, Marion; he must care."

"No," said the queen demurely, her head drooping slightly. "He doesn't care at all."

Her patient's temperature was on the rise.

"It's supper time," announced the neglected and unloved maiden. "Don't get into the doldrums."

"Wait—just a moment. Will you do as Anna asks? Take me back home? Don't answer till I'm through, please. I want to go home, I must go home; Anna needs me. Surely you can spare the day. We'll go to-morrow, on the afternoon train. The doctor will be willing. I must have you see the house, the grounds, the trees. I must see you standing before the big fireplace. Won't you come just for the one day, before the other one will take her place? Will you do this? Don't tell me it is folly and self-indulgent weakness—I know all that! Say you'll come, just for the day."

"I will come," promised the queen.

CHAPTER IX.

The short railroad journey was spent in silence. Dudley was unapproachable, quiet. All the queen's efforts at conversation were ignored. The ride was nearly over—the end was coming—at last—at last!

A crowd was at the station; they crowded around to shake hands, and ask him how he was. The queen exercised her authority.

"Mr. Dudley must go home," she said. "He is very tired."

Dudley gave her an adoring glance. It was the last time she would do anything for him.

The beautiful grounds, with their waving oak trees, came in sight; the brown fields, the reddened maples, the great brick house in the background.

Cousin Anna was at the door, regardless of rheumatism. She gave her cousin a sharp, almost reprimanding kiss.

"You're dead," she declared, "I know you are."

The queen laughed.

"Wait till you see him eat."

"Miss Craddock, you've saved my boy's life—I know you have. So, of course, I love you. But come in."

They entered the old hall, rich with antiques and heirlooms, and an amused smile crossed the queen's face. She had expected that her entrance here would be as a—

Anna would allow no one to settle Arthur but herself. She stared at him for a straight ten minutes, then kissed both the queen and Arthur, and said she was a fool.

Then the ex-nurse suggested a nap, to which Anna reluctantly consented. So upstairs they went, the queen in supreme authority. Anna yielded to her word, and trotted down to the kitchen to make flapjacks for tea. The queen had changed her traveling dress, and was spotless in white.

Dudley's eyes turned to her wistfully. She placed a shawl about the divan head carefully, pulled down a blind, and prepared to slip away.

"Miss Craddock—you are going?"

"You will be better alone."

"Will you do something for me?"

"If I can."

"Stay with us for a week." He could fairly feel his happiness slipping away from him.

"You are not keeping your word," she reminded. "I leave in the morning."

"I beg your pardon. I should have remembered. Then I cannot see you standing before my mother's picture—excuse me, I'm not a bit myself—I must sound maudlin."

"I beg your pardon." The voice was painfully professional.

"Only a delirious fancy of mine," said the man, turning his head away.

"I am going down to see the picture now, and I will tell you what I think. That will do quite as well."

The door was closed.

The queen slipped down into the library, where she found the picture. The delicate face, the tender eyes—all seemed to give her courage. She looked up at it, saying: "Please, do you like me? You are Arthur's mother."

She felt at home; from the worn brasses in front of the open fire to the row of family portraits, there seemed to be a welcome for her.

She was cornered by Anna in the hall. Then came a two-hour talk, which was a master stroke. Every incident, every remedy, every symptom was told that lady in a heart-to-heart manner, until the queen felt that she was initiated into the family circle.

"Now go and rest," said Anna, wiping her glasses, for the simple, direct manner of telling things had won her over. "And you must not think of going for a week."

Arthur was awake. The queen heard him moving restlessly about. She tapped gently.

"Come in," he answered indifferently.

"The house is adorable—quite like an English manor," she said carelessly. "And I have seen the picture. It is beautiful. You weren't half as enthusiastic over it as it deserves. I have made all my arrangements to go on the nine o'clock train. I will not disturb you so early. Yes, the check was more than

generous, and I shall send some of it back. Indeed, I shall. I am going to rest now, so I will say both good night and good-by."

"Good-by," said Dudley stiffly. "I—can never thank you."

He shook her hand loosely. She stepped quickly to the door.

"Marion—stop—I can't let you go like that. It can't end here. I won't let it. You must stay! Oh, you must have seen all along that I love you, dear; that you are the ideal I told you of. You guessed it, didn't you? And you're not going. I'm so damnably weak. I can't let you go."

The game was in the queen's hands, and hearts were trumps!

"And the girl you are to marry?" she interrupted.

"You are too great a temptation. I will break my promise."

"And I, who am engaged to another man, who love him, am I to have nothing to say?"

"Ah, I forgot. Listen, which would you do? If you loved some one so deeply that all your happiness depended upon her, and you were engaged to a child, could you give up this woman and renounce your happiness? Or would you try to win her against a dozen men, and let the child learn to forget?"

There was no hesitancy in the reply. "Give her up."

"Why?"

"Because it would break the child's heart."

"Then good-by. I love you so well that it shall be as you say. Do you understand what I feel? You love a man—you must understand. It shall be as you say. Unruly patient that I am, I learned obedience. Good-by. Perhaps you had better go."

The queen shut the door gently. Thank Heaven, the last act is over, the orchestra is tuning up, and she can come to him as her own self! She slipped up to her room. The pink ring was placed on her finger, and, last of all, the golden wig, the cause of all this turmoil. When she looked in the glass,

Marion Craddock, nurse, had vanished—not a trace remained, save the white costume. It was the childish little actress come back. The eyes were blue now, and she threw up her head to give one last, royal smile.

She did not wait to tap at Dudley's door.

She opened it. He was standing by the window. The student lamp threw his tall figure into good relief. Love him! She could have crawled on her knees.

"Arthur," she said softly.

He turned in a flash.

"Marion—Margaret—what—"

She stepped forward.

"It's my turn to suffer now. Please, I've come to have my heart broken, the brightness taken from my hair, and the uncertainty of my mouth and chin eliminated. I think those are all the pressing alterations. Oh, you blind, foolish man! Did you never guess, and can you now? See, dear, it was a wig—this 'too-bright hair'—that really kept us apart." Here she tossed it away. "I'm Margaret, I'm Marion—I'm yours. Can you forgive the truth? That I loved you so much, and I thought you cared for the hair more than the girl? I thought you would hate me when you found out I had deceived you. And it was so awkward to tell you your mistake.

"I tried to write it to you, but somehow couldn't. Then your letter came. I read between the lines, and it hurt. But I knew that you did not know my really truly self. I was coming to you on that same train, to show you the wig and tell you the truth. I didn't want to

force you to 'fulfill your hasty decision.' Oh, I was badly hurt, even if you did think me shallow and childish. Then the wreck came. I woke up to find you sick in the same house. I knew my chance had come, the chance to make you care for my own self.

"And so I tried. Tell me I have won out. That your stupid, blundering, adorable, masculine mind has grasped this whirlpool of feminine deceptions and thoughts. Tell me that you *do* care. Take me in your arms, and whisper that the combination girl will suit!"

She paused, breathless, her arms outstretched—a pink ring glistening on one finger, a yellow wig on the divan. There could be no mistake—the same sunlight was in her eyes that he so coveted.

The truth came to him. The one arm did service for both.

"Heaven come ahead of time!" he murmured. "Say it all over again."

So she did.

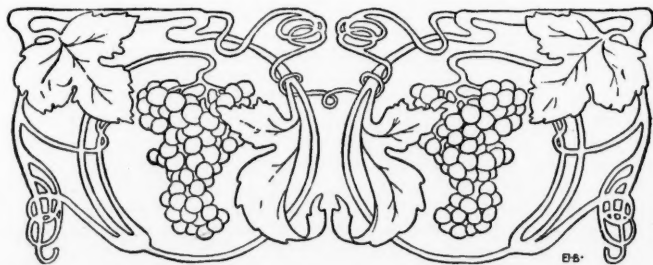
And Anna, confident that her boy was sleeping soundly, had stopped the ponderous tick of the grandfather's clock in the hall, and forbade even a whisper downstairs. The grandfather's clock would have ticked many minutes away before Dudley came to earth, and whispered to the "combination girl" that they tell Anna.

But the queen, even in the fullness of her happiness, answered intuitively:

"She wouldn't understand. We must keep this just for ourselves."

And he, manlike, was satisfied.

And so, as fairy stories tell us, the prince found his princess, and the queen came into her kingdom!



ON WORRYING A LITTLE

By Charles Battell Loomis

DON'T you think I'd better worry a little?" was the whimsical question that I heard a father ask his eldest son.

The son gravely answered: "Yes, worry just a little, but don't overdo it."

Of course, the father knew the futility of worrying, or he would not have asked the question, and the son was equally alive to it, or he would not have answered as he did.

And yet—there is a certain satisfaction to be gotten out of worrying—just a little.

The train on which your daughter is making her first journey alone comes in on time to the minute, and you scan the faces of the passengers getting off, wondering why you don't see her tall form. Being a girl of this generation, she is of course tall. There aren't as many to a family as there used to be, but they are better physical specimens.

Said the wild pig to the lion:

"What, is it possible you have but one cub? Why, I have ten little pigs."

"Yes, but please remember that while I have but one it is a lion."

We'd better start all over again. I don't often break into a sentence like that, but I've heard so much of late of the degeneration of our people that I couldn't help calling attention to the fact that our children are so tall as to make us parents look dwarfed.

You look in vain for your daughter's face. She is not on the train. Nothing untoward has happened to her. Owing to being misinformed by an attendant, she missed the train, and the next one in bears her to you, she being the first passenger to step off.

Now, suppose you are so philosophical that you don't worry at all when you find she has not come on the first train. Think of what you miss in the way of excitement.

If you worry "just a little," you can have her run over by a taxi just as she was crossing the street. Poor child, borne alone to the hospital! How your heart bleeds for her! Why were you fool enough to let a girl of fifteen out of your sight? The injuries may be slight, but meantime she is separated from you. Probably in the excitement of it she is unable to tell her name, or where she lives. Into a ward she goes, perhaps exposed to infectious diseases, although you seem to remember that they are rather careful about exposing ordinary patients to infectious diseases.

Where shall you send a telegram? There are so many hospitals in New York. Poor little thing, lying there so patient, wondering why father and mother don't come! Of course she is injured, or else she would have sent you a telegram, saying she had missed the train.

Yes, worry a little, worry a little more. It's possible that she was not run over. The thought occurs to you that the child, absorbed in the book you sent her to read on the train, may have been carried past the station, and now, at nightfall, she is dismayed to find herself at the terminus of the road, a gloomy town, full of foreign mill workers of doubtful antecedents. There is no train down until morning. Will she know that there is a Y. W. C. A., and think to go there? Will she even think of the police station?

No, she is sobbing in the station. Risky thing to do. Some one may ask her why she is crying, some idler who sees she is pretty. Oh, dear, better far to have her in the accident ward of a New York hospital. There in a way she would be safe. And it has come on to rain, and she has no rubbers with her, and is subject to tonsillitis.

A pretty fool you were to let that baby go alone to New York!

Or worst of all! Some one told her to stay on the train when it reached Bridgeport, and she is now on the main line. To be sure, you have forbidden her to speak to strangers, but travel is tedious, and he may have been an interesting fellow, who knew just how to beguile a little child. Yes, he told her she was mistaken as to Bridgeport being the place to change. Some trains ran through, and this was one of them. Perhaps the man is a Mormon proselyter. But surely he would not take a little girl out there.

Why, there's nothing some men won't do. The fact that your daughter is your daughter does not make her immune to the dangers that beset other pretty girls. You played with fate, you let a mere child go a hundred miles by herself. She arrived safely. That was luck. You took another chance, and allowed her to come back on a train arriving at nightfall. You are not fit to be a father.

Whether she is lying mangled in St. Luke's, or is being enticed away by some evil foreigner, or is going to Springfield with the fascinating Mormon, there to change to a train running West, she is the victim of these calamities because you forgot your guardianship. Aye, the days will hang heavy from now on, whether you see her limping with a crutch, she who was so agile and athletic, or read in the paper that she was murdered by the foreigner, or find her after much expenditure of time in Salt Lake City.

And you're so helpless. You'd send a telegram to the people she has been visiting, but you don't know where to send it. They left for their country place this morning,

and you don't remember the name of the town. No, the wisest thing to do is to be philosophical until the next train comes in, and then, if she is not on that, just go mad.

It's lucky your wife is not along. She *would* worry so. She's probably worrying now because you have not arrived with Margaret. Well, nothing you could telephone would lessen her worry, so she'd better be left in blissful ignorance.

But how she would worry! She'd have the train off the track, and Margaret pinned beneath a car; a manhole blown up just as Margaret was crossing the street, and her skull fractured; Margaret stepping on some third rail that was lying around, or smashed beneath an aeroplane. Didn't a girl in Austria have her head cut off by one of the diabolical machines?

How absurdly women worry! Of course, none of *these* things has happened to Margaret. It's a well-conducted road, and accidents are not common. She knows better than to touch third rails. As for the manhole, that's pure farce. Perhaps once in ten years some one is injured by being blown up on a manhole. And the aeroplane is far from common in cities.

No, let us stick to facts if we are to worry a little. Let us have a basis of common sense. There *are* Mormons going about, and there *are* evil-minded foreigners in every New England mill town, and girls strange to New York *are* easily run over in these days of motors.

Is it possible that you have fallen asleep here in the station, you with your mind full of anxiety about your daughter? Yes, you were allowed by nature to take that method of restoration. There is the station clock pointing to eight-ten, and there is the whistle of the last train from New York. Now we'll know the worst.

You hurry out to the platform, and down the track is seen the gleaming headlight of the express. Another whistle, a roar of brakes, and the train comes to a standstill. No little daughter on this train. What? Yes, there she is, the first one off!

You clasp her to your arms, she who has had so many adventures in this day.

"My child, my child, what happened? How are you?"

"All right."

"What happened?"

"A silly bonehead of an attendant told me the wrong time, and I missed the train I'd meant to take."

"But why didn't you telegraph?"

"Would have, but I bought a magazine, and it cleaned me out, except for a nickel. How's mommy?"

"I'm afraid she's worrying at home."

"Silly! What's the use of worrying?"

"No use at all, my dear, but all people aren't as wise as you and I."



The UNBELOVED

By
**Courtney
Ryley
Cooper**

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

FOR just a second, the maid shrank back in surprise, then laughed as she watched the flying figure on its journey up the stairway.

"She's in the front room—the blue one," she called.

The other did not hear. At the top of the stairs, panting, half laughing, she opened the first door she came to, shot a quick glance inside, slammed it, and proceeded to the next. Another was tried, then another, and another. Then into the front room she burst, and ran halfway across the breadth of it toward the languid figure by the window.

"Janet, you haven't heard, have you?"

The one at the window jumped in half fright at the unexpected entrance, and then turned to laugh, even as the maid had done.

"Goodness, Ethel, what? Who's dead?"

"Why, no one."

"Then why——"

A laugh of happiness interrupted.

"I'm going away—to-night—I came over to tell you—to say good-by—you see——"

Janet rose smilingly, and walked to the excited little figure that faced her.

"Why don't you wait," she suggested, "until you can get your breath?"

"But I haven't got time—I've—got—to pack—and——"

Seating herself on the arm of a chair, Ethel pressed her hands against her breast in a vain effort to stop its throbbing. Finally the panting ceased, but the ardor remained undiminished. She leaned forward, her brown eyes incandescently brilliant with excitement, her cheeks reddening and paling, her lips steeped in carmine from a bounding heart, her hands clasped.

"You see, it's like this," she began.

"Uncle Tim—you remember him, don't you?—has a ranch out in Colorado. He has taken his daughter, my cousin, up there for the summer, and he wants me to come out to be with her. The letter was written two weeks ago, and it got delayed somewhere. They've got to drive twenty miles to meet me, so, unless I start to-night—you see, that's when the letter said for me to start—they'll have all the drive for nothing. So I've just been packing my head off, and—oh, aren't they pretty!"

This last did not concern trunks, or Colorado ranches, or trips; instead, the

eyes of Ethel were directed toward a great vase of roses which adorned the delicate, spindling table in the center of the room. She advanced to gather more closely their dainty scent; and, as she bowed her head, there showed before her, in the mass of green stalks, a card, still lingering.

Ethel looked toward her friend, and smiled with anticipation.

"Can I—can I look?" she asked eagerly.

"Certainly," came from the window, where Janet had again taken her position; "only you mustn't tease."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that. What's the reason of it?" she asked jokingly.

"An engagement that wasn't fulfilled. He had to leave the city this morning on some business, and sent me those to make up for it."

"He? Oh, it's on the card, isn't it?" Then, as the bit of pasteboard was lifted, the look of happiness died pathetically away. For a moment there was silence. Then the card fluttered to the table. "I didn't know you knew him," Ethel finally managed to say.

Janet looked up quickly.

"Tom Bennet?" she asked. "I didn't a month ago. It was at a dance. I don't think you were there—another crowd entirely, dear. I've seen a great deal of him since."

Ethel chose a window in another part of the room, and looked hard at the street.

"You——" she asked. "You like him?"

"That's a funny question. Why, of course."

"And he? Does he like you?"

The girl addressed became serious.

"I hope so," she answered. "I believe he does. Don't you know, you can tell sometimes—by the little things they do, or say, or don't do or say? To tell the truth," she added, half musing, "I believe I'm in love."

"With him?" The query was sharp.

"Why, of course."

Again there was a long silence. Ethel found things in the street more interesting to look at—and not see—than ever.

Something impelled Janet to leave her chair and go to the side of her friend.

"You don't know him, do you?"

"Tom Bennet?" Ethel laughed, with a pathetic quaver. "Yes, I know him."

"Well?"

"Fairly well," was answered, with an attempt at nonchalance.

"Why, he never mentioned you."

"Didn't he?" Ethel asked the useless question with a dull feeling in her heart.

Presently Janet put an arm around the girl at her side.

"This is a lot of foolishness, isn't it?" she asked. "You won't tell the other girls, will you? You see, I don't know how I came to confide in you. But I did, and——"

"No," said Ethel slowly. "I'll tell no one. I'll be away."

Janet looked at her curiously.

"You act so peculiar," she volunteered. "I'm beginning to think that maybe I've broken up a romance, or something of that kind. Why, dearie, what on earth's the matter?"

Ethel was staring out into vacancy, her lips quivering slightly, even against the pressure that was exerted on them. Janet noticed her hand on the window-pane. It was trembling. At last she spoke.

"It's nothing—there isn't anything the matter."

"But you're pale, and——"

"I'm excited about the trip, that's all," came the toneless answer.

"You're not," Janet said quickly, with a sharp narrowing of the eyes. "There's something else. Ethel, listen to me." She raised a hand, as if with an involuntary desire to shake the answer from the girl, and then dropped it again. "He doesn't love you?"

"No," slowly, "he doesn't love me." She shook her head, and Janet noticed that tears, hard fought in the making, were beginning to gather in her eyes. "No," she repeated, "he doesn't love me."

That was not satisfying. Within the woman's soul of the other was gathering a feeling of resentment, almost of hatred, against the little girl who still

stared into vacancy. Something was hidden within her heart, something that had a bearing upon Janet and the man she felt sure loved her. She longed to force it all from the lips of Ethel; to drag it from her, if necessary. Quickly she reached forward and grasped her by the wrist.

"Now, there is something," she said hurriedly, passionately. "There's something about Tom and you—something that you're keeping from me. Why don't you tell me? Ethel, tell me what it is?"

Just as quickly, Ethel whirled. Her face was pale with emotion, her lips a grayish white, her eyes a trifle wild.

"Yes, there is something!" she exclaimed. "I—love him."

"You?"

"I've a right to. I've known him for years. I've known him ever since he and I were children, ever since I have been able to appreciate what friendship could be, what it could come to mean, what—"

Her voice died away in a quaver. She turned to the window again. For a moment, Janet stood speechless. Then she leaned forward.

"Do you mean," she queried, "do you mean—he deceived you?"

Ethel shook her head quietly.

"No," was the answer, in a low murmur. "He didn't deceive me, Janet. If he loves you, if he tells you so, he can do it with a clear conscience as far as I am concerned. He never told me that he loved me. I know," she added, "that the conventional thing for me to have done, Janet, would have been to spring forward, throw my arms around your neck, and wish you every happiness in the world; then run to tell every girl I know about it. But some way—well, I guess I'm different. I don't know, Janet," she said suddenly. "You'll laugh at me for this. You'll think—"

"I'll do nothing of the kind." There was a conciliatory tone that was netting. "I know how you feel—exactly."

"You don't. That's it, you don't, you can't. You will look on me as a sentimental, foolish, impulsive something,

with no power of self-control, no womanly instinct to make me keep a secret of it all, to hide it, to— Oh," she exclaimed, and clenched her hands, "it's not the case of a man and a girl, and just love as love goes! There's something more." Her voice became calmer. "It's just that something which makes me tell you all this."

They came closer in the window. The feeling of resentment in the heart of Janet was beginning to fade.

"Can't you see what it is?" Ethel continued. "Don't blame me for saying this; but don't you see the glamour that surrounds you always; the clothes, the position, the money; all to make a setting for the picture? I," she added, "I am only a canvas. There isn't any frame for me."

Janet drew away.

"Of course, my personality—" she began.

Ethel stopped her.

"Don't look at it that way," she pleaded. "I know I've said the wrong thing, just as I always do. I'm just trying to explain—to tell—I don't know just what I'm trying to say, Janet. Suppose, though, that you were in my place; suppose you didn't have the wealth you have—can't you see what I mean?" Her voice was becoming tremulous again. "I do love him," she continued softly. "I—I guess I always will. I've been loving him too long to forget now. I humored my woman's soul into the belief that some day he would see me in a different light from a friend. I tried to make myself attractive to him, just by the little, simple ways I knew. I thought that, perhaps, there was something in these fairy tales of men who love women because they can cook as well as play the piano, who can forget frivolous things for a while, and just be little home bodies, doing everything they can for the ones they have enshrined within their hearts." Her voice broke. "I thought—I thought—"

Tears stopped her. Janet, in silence, pressed the hand in hers, and waited. At last, Ethel looked up.

"I don't want you to look on me as weak or foolish," she said, with firm-



"She's in the front room—the blue one," she called.

ness again in her voice. "I give him up, Janet. All thoughts of him—at least, I'll try. You'll be happy, I know. He's yours. You are entitled to him. I—I"—the firmness vanished—"I'll go back to what I have always been, just a convenience, just a something to make persons laugh, to play for them when they want music, to chat, or sing—or cook. I'm only Ethel, simple little Ethel, whom the boys drop in on for the evening when there is nothing else to claim their attention. I've never seen things in that light before, Janet; but I do see now. I'm just a makeshift, a sort of understudy in life. Nobody really cares about me—I'm just a person unbeloved—just a convenience, that's all—just a painted canvas—without a frame—without an admirer."

The sobs came then. Janet, her mind relieved of its jealous apprehension, grasped the figure more tightly, and bent forward to press her cheek against the face of the girl within her arms.

Dumped out on the sandy rim of a dried-up river, with the tumbleweed sweeping into houses and stores and sta-

tion from the sage-strewn plains beyond; with a town of brisk-tailed prairie dogs popping up and down with cuckoo-clock persistency not a hundred yards away, Limon, Colorado, serves as a depot in the dreary waste where the transcontinental trains make their shifts of passengers and Pullmans for Denver or Colorado Springs. There the dust-choked tourists may leave their seats for ten minutes of outdoor air, and receive their first view of the Rocky Mountains, stretching hazily, lazily along, eighty miles away. Or perhaps they may stand and gaze in involuntary admiration at the makeshift flower bed, with its surrounding patch of sickly grass in the station inclosure, fighting on and on in a losing battle against the beating, radiating sun and the lack of root-reviving rain.

Yet, with it all, there is a sort of relief in Limon after a night and a half a day in the stuffy, prairie-begrimed Pullmans, dust caked by their passage through the long, rectangular State of Kansas, and their hasty, windy trip across the sandy stretches of Colorado.

And keen, indeed, was this sense of

relief in the heart of Ethel Davidson as she watched the porter at his work of transferring luggage, and reckoned that within a few hours she would be in Colorado Springs, ready to start on another and more interesting phase of her journey up the winding road into the mountains, finally to reach at last the station where she would say good-by to railroads and to the active part of civilization.

The conductor approached.

"Beg pardon," he said, "here's a connection slip for Denver. I'm afraid you'll have to go around by that way if you don't want to lay here about twenty-four hours. There's a freight all jammed up down here about ten miles. We're putting another coach on the Denver train. There it is. The cleaners will be out in a few minutes."

Ethel thanked him, and noted the position of the coach. Then, as a bit of a breeze sprang up, she breathed the ozone deep into her lungs. Yes, it was a relief to be once more in the air, to breathe freely. The night before, she had spent in hot, stuffy wakefulness, the blackness of her berth peopled by a thousand fantastic bits of imagery, her mind tortured now by the belief that she had been weak in her confession to Janet, now by the remembrance that all was over, that the grooves of anticipation in which her life had run had suddenly been confronted by an ever-rising, never-ending, impenetrable wall.

The sickly flowers in the makeshift garden claimed her attention. She walked closer and looked hard at them, noting the heavy lines of sand upon every leaf, the pathetic attempts at blossoms, the wavering stalks.

"Poor little things," she murmured, "fighting it out alone—just like I am—fighting it out alone."

She turned, then gasped. Her hands clutched tight at her hand bag, and her lips opened in an ejaculation of surprise, of half fright. In another second, she was bustling the porter out of the way and bumping into the car cleaners, late at their work, as she hurried into the lone sleeper for Denver, still waiting on the sidetrack for its connection.

6

Inside, she tried to hide herself in her seat, and once bent low as she noticed the straw hat of a man as it passed directly beneath her window. Then, seeing with a quick glance that the other side of the car was practically on the bank of the dried-up river bed, she chose a seat there, regardless of her berth number, and turned her head toward the window, determined not to relinquish the position until the train had started.

Only the dead river bed showed at first, with its scraggly trees on the other side. Then gradually, as the excitement left her, Ethel looked farther on out across the plains, toward the filmy mounds in the distance she knew to be the foothills, on up to the towering mass of grays, and blues, and blacks that represented the mountains. At eighty miles' distance it was all like some great ridge of painted cardboard, touched above by a golden halo, approached by a rolling, almost oceanlike expanse of sun-dried earth and sun-killed vegetation. But, with it all, it carried its vastness, its beauty, its seemingly unapproachable grandeur.

Ethel lost her fright. She pressed her face against the window, and turned eyes of interest toward the mountains.

A jar, the sound of voices, a few persons bustling in the aisle. The connection had been made. A few minutes later, there sounded from outside the singing, warning cry of the conductor, the hissing of brakes, and the grinding of wheels, as, creaking across the bridge which spanned the arroyo, the train began its journey.

For another ten minutes Ethel maintained her position at the window. Then she ventured a look into the car, almost instantly to turn her head to the window again. Across the aisle, her eye had caught the figure of a young man lolling in his seat, his hat pulled down over his eyes. He had not seen her. Ethel was tremblingly thankful that he had not.

Seventy miles still lay ahead, and the girl resolutely began her long, straining vigil at the window, watching the prairie dogs bobbing up and down, the whirling tumbleweed, the stretching

plains, the mountains—anything to claim her attention, to keep her mind away from the thought of the position which, sooner or later, must become racking agony to her. Again and again she told herself that she must not allow her face to show toward the car again; there would be some means of escape, some way when the train reached Denver, and until then—

"Why, hello, Ethel!"

The voice from the aisle reverberated like thunder in the girl's ears. She felt that she reddened; she attempted to conceal her agitation, and turned more resolutely than ever toward the window.

"I beg pardon. This is Ethel Davidson, isn't it?"

Again that voice. Ethel was silent. She raised a hand as if to shield her face; she knew that hand was trembling. The next time, the voice was closer, and accompanied by a plumping sound as the young man sat down, and a laugh.

"Ethel Davidson, turn around here!"

There was nothing else to do. It seemed that her brain suddenly had grown hard and tense, that the muscles of her face were twitching, that her lips were pale. She turned, and tried to laugh in affected surprise.

"Why, Tom, where on earth——"

"All surprised, eh? Where did I come from, and all that?" A laugh accompanied the words. "As if you didn't know. You got the note I sent you before I left, didn't you?"

"Your note?"

"Why, of course." Suddenly he reached into an inside pocket of his coat, and the laughing expression gave way to one of utter blankness. "No," he added. "I don't guess you got it. Here it is. I forgot to mail the thing."

Ethel found something interesting far across the prairie. She knew why he had forgotten to mail it; because his every thought had been of some one else; because he loved another, and, in loving had wrapped all his mind, all his heart in her until he could think of no one else. Just what answer she gave she did not even hear. She was conscious that her lips were moving, that

she was saying something, what she did not know. He answered her. She heard not.

Suddenly there came a resolve into her heart. She must not let him talk of things that hurt; she would not. She became talkative, almost garrulous, speaking of anything that popped into her head, but remaining always far separated from anything which concerned herself and him. She drew from him lengthy details of the freight wreck which had prevented her from going directly to Colorado Springs. She pardoned herself that she might "finish" the reading of a magazine story she had not even begun, chastising herself mentally at the time for her rudeness.

She tried a thousand little tricks and devices successfully to bring about the result she strove for. One by one, the miles were whirled away; and it was with a feeling of great deliverance that she watched the appearing buildings which told of the approach to Denver.

There she would escape him. She had not asked his destination; he had not told her. Certainly he must stop in Denver; but she—she would go on, leaving him behind, and thankfully. At last the train sheds of the station loomed before her. She rose even before the train had stopped.

"Good-by," she said, and extended her hand.

"Oh," he asked, "is this as far as you go?"

"No. I change here for Colorado Springs; but I thought you——"

"Just where I'm going," was the enthusiastic answer. "Here, let me have your bag. We'll get over to that other train in a jiffy."

Inside the Pullman of the other train, Tom set down the grips, and made her as comfortable as possible with an air of proprietorship that was maddening. Again, as the train started, Ethel began her attempts at talkativeness; but her stock of ideas had run dry. He began to speak of persons, of things nearer to her, and the subject she was trying to avoid. Ethel moved uneasily in her seat and tapped the window ledge nervously, answering at random.

Then came the deliverance, in the form of a white-jacketed negro, wabbling through the car, his head wagging with minstrellike grotesqueness as he droned his mission:

"First call fo' suppah in th' dinin' cah!"

Tom looked inquiringly at Ethel.

"That's for us," he suggested.

The girl shrank back.

"I—you go," she answered nervously. "I don't believe I—"

"You do, too," came the interruption, in forcible friendliness. "That's what's wrong with you, young lady. This altitude's getting you. I knew it just the minute I set eyes on you. I know how it is. I've been there before. Now, come on and get some tea or some other sort of stuff, and you'll feel better. Didn't even think I could see you felt bad, did you?"

Inwardly Ethel was thankful for his diagnosis. Within her breast her heart was surging. It was hard. Worse than that, it was downright torture to see, to talk, to be forced to chat and appear gay with the man she had given up only the day before, whom she had hoped she might not see until she had given herself an opportunity to try, at least, to forget. She rose dully at his command, and followed him. As they passed through the vestibule, he touched her arm. It sent a feeling almost of pain through her body.

"Isn't it funny," he asked when they had seated themselves in the dining car, "that nearly everything on the menu here—that is, everything I want—is something you can make to perfection? It won't be half so good here, either."

"Are you sure?" Ethel asked for want of something better to say.

"Am I?" Tom queried back. "Shouldn't I know? Haven't I been making myself obnoxious around your house for the last five years just because of your skill?"



"No. I think I can make it. I'm better now."

He may have meant it as a compliment, but Ethel received it in an entirely different way; in the light that she had come to look at the world in the last thirty-six hours. It was only another evidence to her that her personality amounted to nothing; that she was only an unbeloved; that she was only a convenience, a person endured, as servants who can do their work well are allowed sometimes to have a few more privileges than the ordinary menials. She bit her lips. Tom was talking again.

"If I'm not the dullest thing ever!" he exclaimed. "Here we've been together most of the day, as if it was the most natural thing in the world; and yet I didn't know a thing about it beforehand; and even now I don't know what you are doing here, or where you are going. Of course, I know you're going to Colorado Springs, but that's all."

"The same thing might apply to you," Ethel answered, in an evasive manner.

"Oh, I'm going down there on a little business. I had some things to transact at Manhattan, and, when I got that far, I thought I might as well finish the thing up in one trip. Now, about you?"

Ethel told her destination briefly, and mentally thanked the waiter for his appearance. She was averse to personal conversation. It might at any time lead to something of which she did not care to hear. Tom was in a bantering mood, and she did not like it.

"For all summer?" he asked.

"Perhaps longer," was the vague answer.

"But what are all we fellows going to do while you're gone? We'll all be lost, Ethel."

"For the want of a good cook?" she asked, with a trace of smiling bitterness.

"Oh, not that. That's just one of the wiles you employ."

"I don't suppose any one will miss me," she added, looking out the window at the fast-approaching gloaming.

"I know one or two that will."

She laughed.

"You have more confidences than I have."

"I know it. A fellow can know his own mind, can't he? Why, Ethel," he added, leaning over the table, "don't you know it's so different where you are? Things are so unlike all the other places. You don't have to be so brutally formal, and all that. It's just a sort of simple little existence, where everything is happy and pleasant, and where—well, I don't know how to express it. You know what I mean, don't you?"

Ethel believed she knew; and in her belief it made life more painful than ever.

"Besides," Tom had added, "take, for instance, some girl who insists on a lot of show, for whom, whether you like her or not, you must keep up a constant line of flattery, and all that sort of thing. Tell you what, Ethel," he exclaimed, "I'm going to turn over a few new leaves. I've been trotting along the ordinary course, forgetting the persons I really like in my attempt to keep up just that sort of show. It gets tiresome

after a while. In the future, I'm going to confine myself to just one girl; pay her every attention, and forget the rest. What do the rest care for me, or I for them? Not that much!" he added, snapping his fingers. "And so——"

Ethel rose. She did not care to hear the rest. Her head was whirling, the car seemed suffocating, the grinning negro waiters seemed to be directing every glance at her in a leering, sneering way that made her wish she could strangle them. Her breath caught in her throat, the car swam before her.

"I—I'm dizzy. It's too hot in here," she managed to say. "I believe I'll go back into the coach again. It's cooler there. It's the last car. I can get out on the platform and——"

"Why, of course," Tom said, rising hastily. "You do feel bad, don't you? Here, take my arm."

"No. I think I can make it. I'm better—now."

"Well, then," with a laugh, "if you won't take mine, I'll take yours."

The Pullman was empty, its two other occupants having gone into the dining car. As Tom and Ethel started to enter, the brakeman appeared in the door, and stood aside to allow them to pass.

"How far is it to the Springs?" Tom asked.

"About thirty miles. Next station's Palmer Lake; but we don't stop."

The brakeman passed on. They were alone in the car. Ethel released herself from the arm of Tom and started down the aisle toward the rear vestibule. It was dark now; and in the car ahead could be seen the porter at his work of lighting up.

"Let's tell him not to light up in here just now," Tom suggested. "Don't you think it's nicer just to be in the dark this way, on the vestibule here? We can watch the lights of the town so much better. They're pretty, don't you think? I'll go and tell——"

A roar interrupted. Ethel swayed on the vestibule for just a second before Tom leaped forward to pull her inside the rattling, swaying coach, and half

drag her, in his excitement, to one of the seats.

"We're off the track, this last coach!" he shouted above the grinding, tearing, bumping noise. "Curl up in that seat, get all the way up in it, and brace yourself against me. Then, if anything happens——"

Ethel, without a word, obeyed. By now the car was filled with dust, and was swaying along the ties with a sickening motion that steadily grew greater. Up ahead, Tom could see excited persons running about in the other car and steadying themselves against the seats. A brakeman appeared on the vestibule of the front car.

"Anybody in there?" he shouted above the roar of the derailed coach.

Tom tried to answer. A great sound, a crushing, deafening roar drowned his voice. A few lights shot past, there came a screeching, grinding wail from the wheels, the car suddenly veered to one side, and plunged downward. Tom gritted his teeth. He leaned forward, braced himself as best he could, and threw his arms wide across the seat in which Ethel had buried herself, that they might add their frail protection to her in the coming crash. Another sickening whirl, and he was thrown across the aisle. He felt a great, trip-hammer something strike his head. He lay still.

Ethel, in her seat, grasped the sides with a clutch intensified by terror. Once again the car veered and whirled seemingly miles through space. Then, with a great plunge, it struck a yielding something; one end seemed to float a moment, and then sink, while a drenching spray of cold water saturated her.

For a second longer the car rocked, then settled at an angle. From one end there came the splashing, lapping sound of water.

Ethel leaped from the seat, and attempted to stand in the inclined aisle. It came to her now. The car, in leaving the track, had plunged down the embankment and into the lake!

By the lack of water in the upper end and by the inclined position of the car, Ethel believed that one end still rested on the bank. From outside, there came

no shouts, no noises. A gray space at the end of the aisle showed her that the way to freedom was still open. She started toward it; then stopped. Her foot had struck the inanimate body of Tom.

Her teeth chattering from fear and the coldness of the water, she bent over and grasped the form in the aisle, shaking the shoulders with almost superhuman strength in her efforts to rouse her companion to consciousness. The car seemed to tremble a little; and a hasty glance showed that the gray space at the end had become smaller. With grueling certainty, it carried the information that the car was steadily sinking into the lake, that within a few minutes more escape by the bank would be cut off. Temptation burned red within her brain. Perhaps he was dead. It was her right to leave. It was her right to take the chance to free herself. He was a man, she was a woman—a woman unbeloved. That, too, was beginning to creep insistently into her brain, branding scorching impressions deeper and deeper.

Again the car trembled; again the gray space grew less. Ethel shuddered; then, with a mighty effort, shook off the temptations that were crowding upon her.

"I'll not leave him. I'll not," she muttered. "Tom, Tom, can't you hear me? Tom!" Her wandering hands passed over his face, her fingers clasped his hair. She seized it, and shook the resistless head with impassioned cruelty. "Tom, Tom, Tom!"

There was no answer. The temptations were coming back. Ethel shut her eyes against the gray space at the end of the car, and again bent forward.

"I'll get him out—some way," she said to herself. "I'm strong enough. I'm strong enough. Tom, can't you hear me? We're caught, here in the car. We're caught——"

A wave of relief shot over her, chilling her flesh in its sudden message of joyfulness. A slight groan had come from the darkness below her. She could feel that the man in the aisle was attempting to rise.



"I've been waiting a long, long time for you," he said softly.

"Ethel!" he called indistinctly, vaguely. "Ethel! Ethel! Ethel!"

"Here!" she answered tensely. "I'm trying to get you out. Come!"

He was on his knees now, groping in the darkness.

"Which way? I can't see."

"This way." The car seemed to shoot downward again, the splashing water became greater. "Quick, Tom!" she called. "There's just a chance! This way!"

He had risen now; and, half dragging him forward, the girl started up the aisle. Suddenly her mouth opened with horror. The gray space was gone!

About her ankles, she could feel the icy, encompassing touch of water.

"We're caught!" It was the voice of Tom by her side. "It's slipped from the bank. Come, we'll try a window. Can you swim?"

Before Ethel could answer, there came another downward plunge, completely immersing them. Then the car rose again. Still clinging to the seats, Ethel strove to keep her head above the water. A voice from the darkness came to her, an attempt at reassurance.

"We've got a chance," Tom said. "We're afloat. The trucks are gone, I guess, so the car won't sink. Can you get up on this seat? It will take

you more out of the water."

An arm reached from somewhere, and seemed to pull her upward. Things were beginning to become hazy now. The startling clearness of the first awakening was beginning to pass. Ethel exerted her strength in the manner of an automaton. On the seat, the water was only waist high, and Tom's arm was around her now to steady her. His words were of forced optimism.

"It won't get any higher," he said. "But I'm afraid, Ethel—do you think you could stand this till morning? Well, if I'm not the biggest idiot ever! Here, brace me."

The protecting arm left her; and Ethel could feel that he was climbing upward. There was a sound of muttered ejaculations, and then there came another splash as Tom went downward. In a moment, he was up on the seat by her side again.

"I've let down an upper berth," he said. "The water hasn't gotten there yet. We can get up there and be fairly comfortable. Come on now, I'll lift you. Are you ready?"

"All ready, Tom."

It seemed to Ethel that her voice had found a new strength, a new confidence, as the arms closed around her and aided her upward. In a moment more, she was out of the water; while Tom, by her side, was trying to wring some of the dampness from her clothing.

"Here," he exclaimed, a second later, "here's a blanket. Wrap it around you. Feeling all right, little girl?"

"Pretty good." She smiled.

"Well, the worst part's past now. If you can keep warm till morning, we'll be all right. You see, we might be able to get out on the roof through this ventilator; but we'd better reserve that till morning, when some one can see us."

"Do you think it will be that long?"

"Well, you never can tell. I'm going to try to keep it from being."

Then, leaning far out into the aisle, he reached upward, and opened the ventilator. A shout followed; but it brought no answer.

"Can't see a light anywhere," was the announcement that followed. "But I'm going to keep on trying to stir up something."

"But surely some one must have seen the car go over."

"Not necessarily. Of course, the train crew knew. However, it may have taken some time for the train to stop and to return here. I'll look again."

This time the shout was stronger and longer, and repeated several times.

"They're back," Tom said hurriedly from the ventilator. "There are lights up the track about two hundred yards. They're mixed up on the place we went

over. Say, do you know how far we are from shore?"

"Why, no."

"Not less than seventy-five or a hundred feet. This is a regular old boat we're in." He laughed. "Come on, Ethel, cheer up! Things are all right now. I'll get hold of them in a minute. Hello, there!"

"He-e-l-l-o-o-o-o," came drifting across the water.

"Out here in the middle of the lake," Tom shouted, in reply. "We're afloat in a Pullman. They're chasing around on shore like a lot of ants," he said to Ethel. "Look like a bunch of fireflies. Guess they've got to go around to the other side of the lake for a boat; over to the clubhouse, you know. But we'll be out of here in just a little while now. Feeling all right?"

"Fine!" Ethel laughed, in reply, in spite of her shivering.

Tom's voice became more serious.

"We had a mighty close call, little girl."

"I know it, Tom," she said earnestly. "And it has brought something home to me. Don't you know what I was talking about in the dining car?"

Ethel's brain cramped again.

"Let's think about something else," she said hurriedly. "Now——"

"I see," he answered. "I see just how it is. You think I'm trying to take advantage of you, Ethel. Honestly I'm not. I'm willing to stand by the consequences. We'll be out of here in a little while; and, if your answer is adverse, well"—he hesitated—"I'll just be the ordinary friend that I used to be."

Ethel leaned forward.

"What on earth are you talking about?" she asked, in surprise.

"Well," Tom answered dubiously, "I've been trying to find out for five years whether I was just 'one of the fellows,' or whether you really thought something of me, like I do you, and whether——"

"Something of you?"

"Why, yes, Ethel. Now, please don't think I'm trying to take advantage of you. If relief wasn't so near, I

wouldn't say a word; but I've been trying to get up the courage for so long—that now that it has come to me—well, I'll just have to come out and be blunt about it, I guess. I've been wanting to ask you to marry me for—well, for—I don't know how long. But you've always been just so—well, so equally distributed—he laughed in an embarrassed way—"among the whole bunch of us that—that—"

Ethel was silent a moment in a new-found joy, yet in a new-found apprehension.

"Tom," she said finally, "isn't there some other girl? Are you sure?"

"Nothing but those I was talking about this evening. Don't you remember what I said about turning over a new leaf?"

"Oh!" said Ethel, and became silent.

Tom did not speak, either; but softly through the darkness his hand crept tremblingly forward to find that, when it touched hers, there was no resistance. And, emboldened, his other arm went out, to draw a shivering little, blanket-covered girl toward him.

"I've been waiting a long, long time for you," he said softly. "Sometimes—"

"Hello in there!" It was a voice from outside, accompanied by the splash of oars.

"Come on in, the water's fine," Tom answered, with a laugh; and, as the axes began their first crashing blows upon the roof, he leaned forward.

"May I," he pleaded, "my Lady of the Lake?"

Ethel laughed softly. Their lips touched.



Transformation

DO you remember, dear, a week ago,
 I walked along the throbbing village street,
 And then across the wide, parched fields you know,
 Where lonely trees stood drooping in the heat,
 Across the bridge, and up the long, gray hill,
 Under the burning sun of summer noon?
 The daisies hung their heads, the birds were still,
 The brook beneath the bridge was out of tune.
 From 'round my feet the earth sent hot retort
 To the relentless blue.
 And yet the way was short—
 I walked with you.

Dear, yesterday, again, at eventide
 I turned my steps along the selfsame way.
 The village street was sweet and cool; the wide,
 Now verdant fields had laughed with showers all day.
 The trees were whisp'ring what the rain had told;
 The wind had built a palace for the sun
 Of wondrous clouds of purple, white, and gold,
 From which he looked abroad ere day was done.
 "Good cheer, good cheer," I heard a robin's song;
 As gold the hilltop shone.
 But, oh, the way was long—
 I walked alone.

MARY POTTER ANGELL.



The Troupers

Being Extracts from the Reminiscences
of Mrs. Samuel Barker, the
Veteran Actress

Transcribed by
HULBERT FOOTNER

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

THE season 1903-4 was a frost. It was after Christmas before I finally landed an engagement with George Maynooth's company. He was reviving "Esperanza," a three seasons' favorite; and so many of us were "resting," he had no difficulty in reassembling the original company except two or three. We gathered in Lyric Hall for rehearsals with the pleased expressions of dogs waiting for a bone at the table. The first I ran into was Velma Garvey, who embraced me like her long-lost mother.

"Darling Mrs. Barker!" she screamed, with a preliminary glance around to make sure she was well observed. Velma never misses an effect on or off. "How sweet to be reunited!"

"Delightful!" I gasped, straightening my hat after the impact.

"And how young you look!" she went on. "Positively, if you wouldn't let your hair go white, you could play ingenues!"

And me sixty-nine years old at the time! But I will say I have kept my figure.

"I am getting a divorce!" Velma announced, in a tragical whisper.

Velma's grievance was a hardy perennial, like "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

"Haven't you got it yet?" I asked.

"No; but this time I mean it," she in-

sisted. "Weston Garvey is a brute! I shall never let him talk me around again."

Velma is a heavy woman professionally—also naturally. At this time, she confessed to twenty-eight, to which one should add the usual time allowance of, say, ten years. But, as she used to say, with a cast-up of the eyes, she had the heart of a child. At other times, she said she was all heart. She palpitates with emotion. She is not classically beautiful. Indeed, I have heard a confirmed knocker describe her face as a large suet pudding with two lonely currants in it—but that was ill-natured. She makes up well. It is the ambition of her heart to play *Juliet*. I hope I shall live to see that performance.

While we waited for our cues, we took stock of our prospective companions of the road.

"Maberly is out, I see," said Velma. "I suppose they couldn't pay his salary. They have a man called Carver Mellen for the heavy lead. That is he with the auburn hair. I wonder if he's married? What do you think of him?"

I saw a big man, who refused to recognize his fifty years in passing. Once upon a time, he had been a real beau, no doubt; and he had acquired a peevish expression because the world now refused to applaud him in his old part. Finding our eyes upon him, he assumed a very interesting, romantic expression. "Romco shopworn," I murmured.

Velma never waits for the answers to her questions.



"Darling Mrs. Barker!" she screamed. "How sweet to be reunited!"

"They say we've got eight weeks of one-night stands," she rattled on. "They're only giving out the route three weeks in advance for fear of kicks."

"I'd be thankful to play the tank circuit on a season like this," I said.

"And there's Ed Skelton," she continued, without a pause for breath. "They've got him for treasurer again. What beautiful brown eyes!"

"Ed has grown fat," I remarked. "He begins to look like a Bartlett pear stood upon little legs."

"Did you hear that Dan Staley was starring Ed's wife, Dolly Evans Skelton, and she's dropped the Skelton off her paper, and is suing Ed for a di-

vorce? Dan can do more for her than Ed, she says. How mercenary!"

There was no use trying to get a word in edgewise, so I gave up.

"Mr. Maynooth is bringing along his wife to play the lead and save expenses. Heavens! How she's gone off! No wonder she wears three veils. And Daisy Stryker is out with Raymond Vincil's company; so Dalley, the stage manager, is bringing his wife to play the maid's part. Fancy a French maid with *her* figure! Goodness! What a domestic company we'll be!"

Velma suddenly pulled herself up and turned a large, pale, meaningful face on me.

"Good heavens, Mrs. Barker!" she gasped. "Do you realize that this

year I will be the only girl in the company! Oh, I'm *so* glad you will be along to mother me!"

During the first few days on the road, it seemed as if Velma's fears were to prove unfounded. She was not annoyed by the attentions of any of the men. She continued to carry her own valise; and no one forced himself on her in the trains, though the other half of her seat was often vacant.

One night when she came into my room for a chat—Velma loves to waft through hotel corridors in a blue kimono, with her hair down her back and a *Lady Macbeth* expression—I ventured to rally her a little.

"Isn't it nice," I said, "that the men are such a quiet, sensible lot, and do not hang around and bother one?"

Velma favored me with a sharp glance, but did not see the hook, and swallowed it whole.

"Delightful!" she breathed. "I never knew before what it was to be left in peace. Anyway, they're an impossible lot!" she added. "That is, all except Mr. Mellen. Don't you think he plays the heavy part beautifully?"

"Excellent appetite for the scenery," I suggested.

It did not get to her.

"His note of rough brutality is just right in those scenes," she said. "I would like to tell him how much I admire his conception of the part."

"Why don't you?" I said.

Velma turned an indulgent smile on me.

"Ah! If I were *your* age, dear Mrs. Barker, I could," said she. "But coming from me it might be misunderstood. I have to be so careful."

"Then don't tell him," I said.

"But I think one always ought to say those things when one feels them," she persisted. "Any real encouragement is rare enough, goodness knows!" She turned, and fussed at her hair in the mirror. "*You* might tell him what I think of his performance," she said, very offhand. "That could do no harm."

"All right," I said amiably.

I told him the next night on the stage, while we were waiting in the entrance for our first-act cues. He received it with an expression of conscious merit; and, as soon as he came off, he sidled over to Velma to hear more of the same. She was very much astonished at his approach, but not repellant. Next morning, he carried her valise to the train, and thereafter they were inseparable. I generally tagged along behind, for he was perfectly well able to carry my little bag, too. It was funny to hear them talk. Neither paid the slightest attention to what the other said; and, while one was holding forth, the other would sit just bouncing with impatience to begin.

This went on for a few weeks; and then one night, when Velma and I were sharing the same dressing room, she confided to me over the make-up that Carver Mellen did not understand her.

"He's a dear boy," she sighed; "but selfish, I fear. All my thoughts, and feelings, and aspirations fall upon deaf ears. He cares only to talk about himself."

"I could have told you from the first that he would not make a good listener," I suggested.

"His personal vanity is almost a mania," Velma went on. "What do you think, he let his beard grow for three days to prove to me it was the same color as his hair, so I would not think he dyed?"

"Did you ever learn if he was married?" I asked.

"He is," said Velma, "terribly so! She's in burlesque. 'The Cherry Blossom Girls.' A dreadful woman! He showed me a telegram from her the other day. It read: 'For Heaven's sake send me five dollars. Love and kisses. Estelle.' Just ten words."

"Love and kisses thrown in," I murmured.

Velma did not notice.

"I wish I could wake Carver up to the real big things of life!" she said thrillingly. "The things that take us out of ourselves, and make us akin to the angels."

This was a line from Velma's part in "Hearts Athrob."

"For instance?" I queried.

"I do not think the poor boy has ever been in love," she sighed.

We had been out about five weeks, when it became known to the company that Dolly Evans had secured her divorce. I cannot say that we felt any overwhelming sympathy for her late husband. Ed Skelton was not popular in the company. He was too much inclined to think because he held our railway tickets, and herded us this way and that between musty railway stations and worse theaters, that he had a sort of mortgage on our souls. Ed was infinitely too fond of getting us up at the

screech of dawn when a later train would have done just as well—just to show us his authority. But there! I make a point of never kicking against the management. Still, everybody said Ed was too big for his shoes. No one was sorry when the doorkeeper at Edwardsville knocked him downstairs, or when he got a black eye somehow or other in Ithaca.

Velma, however, was convulsed with sympathy when she heard of the divorce. At the time, we were huddled in one of those wretched junction stations, with nothing to do but yawn and twiddle our thumbs.

"The poor man!" sighed Velma. "I alone can understand what he is suffering!"

"No one is divorcing you," I suggested.

"It's the same thing," she returned, with dignity. "I wish I could tell him what I feel."

"No one is stopping you," I said.

We could see the object of her commiseration through the window, walking up and down the platform with his head on his breast, and his hands clasped behind him, like Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*.

Velma shook her head.

"No, it might look unwomanly," she said sweetly. "But I could write him a little note."

She immediately busied herself with fountain pen and pad. At the end of half an hour, she showed me the result. It read something like this:

DEAR MR. SKELTON: My heart goes out to you in your grievous loss, and I cannot help sending you these few lines of sympathy. I, too, have suffered. I knew and loved poor Dolly in happier days—Little Sunbeam we called her. The recollection of those days must be a strong consolation to you in your sorrow. That you may rise from it strengthened and ennobled is the heartfelt wish of your sincere friend,

VELMA GARVEY.

"Very pretty," I said, handing it back. "But doesn't it sound a little as if Dolly were dead?"

"So she is," returned Velma crushingly. "To him."

"Oh!" I said.

"Strengthened and ennobled!" murmured Velma. "Don't you think that was well expressed?"

"Beautiful!" I said. "But—er—what would Carver Mellen say?"

"Carver Mellen has nothing to do with me," she said quickly. She glanced at the heavy man where he sat having a snooze in the corner of the station. "Besides, dear Mrs. Barker," she added penitently, "I'm afraid I have been seeing too much of Carver."

Velma's windings are sometimes hard to follow.

"Eh?" I said, surprised.

Velma looked out of the window.

"They say Ed Skelton still has an interest in several good companies," she said thoughtfully. She transferred her eyes to the corner of the station. "I do wish some one would tell Carver to keep his mouth shut when he sleeps," she said irritably. "It looks so coarse! No, Mrs. Barker," resuming her penitent air, "I must see less of him. My conscience has been troubling me! A married man!"

"But you're married yourself," I exclaimed.

"Yes; but I'm *almost* divorced," replied Velma, with dignity.

The note was sent, and Ed Skelton, presumably grateful for the proffered sympathy, gradually replaced Carver Mellen as the carrier of Velma's valise. When I sat behind them in the train, I could hear them talking by the hour about their respective divorces.

Carver Mellen did not seem to mind the changed state of affairs at all; but Velma was never the woman to let the matter drop so easily.

One day she announced to me in her tragical whisper:

"Mrs. Barker, they are *talking* about me."

"I haven't observed it," said I.

"Oh, yes," she insisted. "I see them looking and whispering."

"Then why not sit alone?" I suggested.

"It is my duty as a woman not to forsake poor Ed in his time of trouble," she said.

Weeks of one-night stands had got on

my nerves a little, and I was becoming weary of Velma's endless dramatics. I wanted to sleep.

"I do hope there won't be any trouble between them," she breathed. "You are very close to Carver. You might find out delicately how he feels toward me."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" I said under my breath.

"A spark might precipitate an explosion at any moment," she went on. "Ed is frightfully jealous. If Carver ever heard the frightful things he says about him——"

This was too much.

"If you keep them to yourself, he won't," I said sharply.

Velma gave me "one look," as she calls it, and arose with great dignity.

"Thank you," she said magnificently. "I see what I have to expect from you in future."

However, I had my nap in peace.

That finished me with Velma. She transferred her confidences to the wife of the stage manager. Fanny Dalley is dumpy, and keeps her hair blond, while Velma is majestic and dark; but inside they are much alike, a pair of child's balloons, the pair of them—inflated with emotional hydrogen. Velma whispered to Fanny, and Fanny whispered to Sid Covey, and Ben Brattle, and Carver Mellen; and whispering was soon general up and down the car aisles, and in the dressing rooms at night. I was glad I was out of it. Velma bore herself like a Christian martyr—and enjoyed it all thoroughly.

Scraps of a conversation I overheard between Fanny and Carver Mellen, while the train stood in a station, showed how it was brought about.

"You are so magnanimous, Mr. Mellen," said she.

"Oh, Mrs. Dalley!" said he, assuming a magnanimous expression.

"Miss Garvey and you were good friends, of course—no more."

"Sure!" he said.

"She's welcome to go with Skelton. Miss Garvey's a fine actress undoubtedly; but a man would hardly think of her in a sentimental light; at least, not a man like me. Besides, I have a wife already."

"Then there's nothing in all this talk!" said Fanny. "I'm so glad!"

"Who's been talking about me?" demanded Carver, interested immediately.

"Oh, I hear nothing," said Fanny. "But unfortunately all men are not so high-minded as you are."

"It's a man, is it?" said Carver. "Name him!"

"Indeed, I'll do

no such a thing. It's only the little men who have envious natures, isn't it?"

"Skelton, by gad!" he cried. "The little gooseberry! I could squash him between finger and thumb!"

"Gooseberry!" said Fanny, giggling. "Oh, excuse me, but that is really so good."

"What does he say about me?" demanded Carver.

"I am no mischief-maker," said Fanny piously.



"Out you go, gooseberry!"

A good deal more of this passed back and forth before she finally murmured: "Anyway, it's perfectly absurd to speak of a man like you in the fullness of his youth and powers as a 'has-been.'"

"A has-been!" cried Carver, with fire in his eye. "Did he say that? Me! Oh, the fat pug! The toad!"

And so the fuse was lighted.

After giving our performance in Plattsburg, we were routed out of bed before daylight on the coldest morning I can remember. Ordinarily the jump to Ogdensburg takes four hours, but we ran into a howling blizzard, and we were obliged to stop every few minutes to allow the engine, they told us, to get up steam enough to pull us a mile or two farther. At this rate, it was the middle of the afternoon before we reached Malone, halfway.

On a long, long day such as this, with everybody idle, and hungry, and peevish, all the little plots thicken and curdle. The car buzzed with whispering like a beehive. Fanny Dalley circulated busily from group to group. All day Ed Skelton and Carver Mellen glared at each other sidewise, like two strange dogs spoiling for a fight. Velma, palpitating with excitement, held the spotlight.

The car had only been prepared for a day journey, and, when the early darkness fell, it was found there was no oil in the lamps. They burned for a little while, then one by one sputtered and went out, and we rode in inky blackness. Carver Mellen was sitting with me, while Velma and Ed Skelton were some four seats ahead.

As the last light flickered out, Carver grumbled aloud: "Rotten mismanagement somewhere!"

I suppose that he meant the railroad; but a very sarcastic voice spoke out of the darkness ahead:

"Now for the anvil chorus!"

Of knockers, he meant.

"Have you ever noticed, Mrs. Barker," said Carver, raising his voice, "that when a cap fits, it is generally put on?"

There was a silence in the dark car

like just before a fearful thunderstorm at night. The rest of us sat there still as mice, not knowing what would happen next. I gathered that Velma was imploring Ed to be calm.

Said Ed to Velma:

"These prima donnas blame the management every time they get a sore toe."

"A sore toe may be got in a good cause, Mrs. Barker," said Carver significantly. I suppose he meant from kicking something offensive.

"Or from kicking a brick under a hat," put in the voice ahead.

"Isn't it strange some people are so egotistical they apply everything you say to themselves?" said Carver.

"Ever hear about the peacock, Miss Garvey, who thought all the birds but himself were conceited?" drawled Ed.

This shot told. There was a burst of nervous laughter up and down the car. In the darkness, one could laugh without being accused of taking sides. Carver fumed beside me, searching for a crushing rejoinder. Finally he said grandly:

"Once a gentleman always a gentleman!"

I thought this rather feeble myself; but Carver was immensely pleased with it.

"Huh! The peacock's an amusin' bird," came from ahead.

I always try to keep out of trouble myself; but a funny thing occurred to me, and, before I thought, I prompted Carver.

"How about the squab?" he asked.

It made a great hit with the company. Everybody roared.

"Let me go! Let me at him!" we heard Ed saying, in a muffled voice.

"Mrs. Barker," Carver went on, "did you hear about the nut that was cracked on the stairs in Edwardsville, and the turnip that got bashed in Ithaca?"

"By gad! There's a red headlight going to be smashed right now!" roared Ed.

Everybody sprang up at once, and a scene of dreadful confusion followed. Fortunately the train had run into a snowdrift, and was standing still.



He snapped his fingers under Velma's nose.

Carver darted into the aisle, I after him. Some one else collided with me, and Carver escaped me. We were all in a bunch. You couldn't see your nose before your face. I grabbed somebody. Somebody else grabbed me. Everybody implored everybody else at the top of their voices to keep quiet. Velma was screeching like one possessed. Goodness knows what the other travelers in the car must have thought!

While we were clutching vainly at each other, the two adversaries escaped us. They must have picked each other in the dark by instinct. Suddenly, from the direction of the front door, we heard a great scuffling, and panting, and smacking, and swearing, and then

the glass of the door went out with a horrifying crash.

Velma screeched: "Oh, my poor Ed!"

We made a rush to separate them, but all got wedged in the aisle. One would have thought from the sounds that we were all fighting together. Before we got there, the door was banged open.

We heard Carver cry: "Out you go, gooseberry!"

"Oh, save him!" cried Velma.

As we reached the platform, the door of the smoker ahead was thrown open, and a brakeman appeared, holding up a lantern to see what was the matter. By its light, we saw Carver Mellen knee deep in a snowdrift below, holding Ed

Skelton down, and vigorously washing his face with the cindery snow. Velma screeched again, and hid her face on my shoulder.

"Oh, why didn't Heaven make me an ugly woman!" she moaned.

Carver, when he saw us, left off, and, coolly lighting a cigarette, boarded the smoker. The other men helped poor Ed on our car, gasping and spluttering. The brakeman hung up his lantern to give us a little light. Ed was dropped into a seat beside Velma; and she borrowed all our handkerchiefs to mop his streaming face.

I found myself in the seat behind them. In the uproar, Velma had forgotten her differences with me. Finally, when things had quieted down, she turned to me, and said very impressively:

"Well, Mrs. Barker, at least no one can talk about me now!"

I confess I could not follow her reasoning.

The dove of peace returned to the company. Carver Mellen was given notice; but he said it was worth it. Ed Skelton wired to the management, in New York, to have a new man join us in Chicago. Ed was very subdued; and it was noticeable that he avoided Velma. It worried her, though she would not confess it.

"Ed doesn't wish to compromise me," she explained. "He is waiting until after next Sunday. I respect him for his delicacy."

It occurred to me he might have another reason.

"My case comes up on Wednesday," Velma went on, "and my lawyer writes me there is not a doubt of our winning. I shall receive the notice of the decision in Chicago on Sunday. You and Fanny must come to the theater with me when I get my mail. I want my *closest* friends to share my happiness."

And, as soon as we landed in Chicago, the three of us set off for the theater. Velma had put on her very best, and she bought roses for the three of us. One would have thought she was a bride welcoming the shackles, instead

of striking them off. She asked us to lunch with her afterward.

Coming in from the street, it was some moments before we could accustom our eyes to the darkness of the stage. On our way across, we ran into a strange man.

"Hello!" he said familiarly.

Velma gave one look, gasped, staggered, and went off into violent hysterics. I got her a chair, and she dropped into it, moaning, crying, and clinging to us. Fanny and I were terribly distressed. Fanny ran to get her some water, while I slapped her hands, and begged her to control herself.

Through it all, the man stood looking at her sarcastically, and smoking. He was a lean man, with a long nose and a mop of lank, dust-colored hair. He was ordinary-looking except for his eyes, which were bright. His callousness exasperated me.

"Can you do nothing but stand there and smile at this poor woman's distress?" I said sharply.

He made a flourishing bow.

"Excuse my apparent hard-heartedness, ma'am," he said. "But I am so accustomed to it."

A ray of light began to filter through my brain.

"If you'll accept a suggestion from a mere man," he went on, "you'll never cure her with your attentions. Sympathy only heaps fuel on the fire. Let me show you my way."

Fanny and I were so astonished, we actually let him have his way. He snapped his fingers under Velma's nose.

"Shut up, pie face!" he said, with the utmost brutality. "Come to! Come to! You're making a perfect guy of yourself."

To our astonishment, Velma sat bolt upright.

"Weston Garvey, I always said you were a brute!" she said.

"That's understood," he said imperiously. "Come to my arms, darling."

And actually, after all she had said, she went to him, and, hiding her face on his shoulder, wept real tears. He patted her back, and gravely winked at Fanny and me.

"But the divorce?" I gasped.
 "Up the spout," he said. "Judge," says I, when I appeared before him; 'judge, your honor,' says I, 'my wife's all right, but she's just naturally got the artistic temperament. I'm terrible soft on the old girl, though she takes a deal of handling; but I can do it. It's this working in separate companies that makes trouble. We've been married fifteen years, and she's sued me for divorce ten times; but I always got hold of her in time. By a lucky chance, I've just landed an engagement in her company, and if you'll postpone this case, judge, I'll guarantee to fix things up. What's more, I'll guarantee that here-

after it'll be a joint engagement or none, and we won't make any further work for you, your honor."

"What did he say?" I asked.

"Case dismissed." And leans over and shakes me by the hand."

Velma, still sniffing, raised her head and prodded her back hair. Suddenly she attacked her husband's shoulder.

"Weston Garvey," she stormed, "you didn't brush your coat this morning. As for your tie—here, let me fix it!"

Weston winked at us again. I declare I began to like that man.

"Will you join wife and me in a little luncheon, ladies?" he said. "Just to celebrate this joyful reunion."



A Resemblance

THE curtain thrills, about to rise;
 Up spring the footlights, brighter far
 For this dim house, as darkening skies
 Burnish the evening star.

Amid the warm, faint dusk, I see
 Close to my shoulder, what? The face
 All strong, yet fond, that once for me
 Lit up the darkest place.

Feature for feature it is his;
 The eyes as soft as a caress,
 The smile that sought to mock, but is
 A sun-ray none the less.

Old memories troop; a lover's day,
 The little rambling rose of June
 Like live coals in the hedge; the gay
 Outburst—a thrush's tune.

The curtain climbs, and in the glow
 Fly the old dream, the trysting place.
 Those features that I thought to know
 Live in a stranger's face.

He leans to one whose place is set
 Next his; with hers his laughter shook
 Just now. He is hers—and yet, and yet
 Wears my dead lover's look!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



Going the Pace in Good Works *by Anne O'Hagan*

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

LEONORA, like ninety per cent of the women of her age and her social and financial standing in the community, developed a civic conscience about the time she was thirty-two or three. In other words, the ancient delights of dancing and amateur acting had palled upon her; the problems which had served to fill up many of the otherwise unoccupied hours of her early married life—whether her husband would ever cease to love her, and what she would do in such a calamitous event—no longer held a poignant and fearful interest for her.

Edward had settled down into an eminently comfortable sort of spouse, unlikely to cause his wife emotional shock; her two children had cut all their teeth, had a due assortment of infantile ailments, and had reached a healthy ten and twelve; they were, after the habit of American children, individuals with a multitude of pursuits and interests of their own, which Leonora, supervising, did not find all-sufficient for her own intellectual needs. She did not have to work for a living; her household ran with the smoothness of those households where prosperity and an elegant simplicity happily combine; she had a brain and energy, and the Old Guard of philanthropic and civic activity in her city fell greedily upon her.

"You ought to be interested in that, Leonora," ingratiatingly remarked the head of the new settlement just established in the mill district.

The settlement head had been a college classmate of Leonora's, and that

lady felt the force of the suggestion. She consented to be one of the board of managers.

In philanthropy, as in vice and most other things, it is the first step that counts. Leonora, committed to the settlement, found herself the not unwilling prey of the leaders in other movements. In her town, as elsewhere, there was a certain sameness about all the "boards" and committees. The personnel of the settlement directorate was not precisely the same as that of the children's hospital; nor was that of the children's hospital exactly that of the kindergarten association, or the home for wayward girls, or backward boys, or elderly inebriates, or night-lunch wagons, or park committees.

But each body of directors formed a little circle interlapping with the other little circles. So that there was, one might say, an emissary from every board at every other board meeting. And when a "good thing" like Leonora appeared—the objectionable phrase is Leonora's husband's—full of unused "civic" energy, with a house in a desirable neighborhood for the holding of "parlor meetings" for the spread of various faiths, with a good visiting list, it was inevitable that she should be seized upon.

"You may talk as much as you please about ameliorating the condition of the poor this way and that," cried a pure-milk zealot to Leonora, having fallen in with her at the settlement board meeting, "but unless we save the lives of the babies there'll be no poor to ame-

liorate. Just think, ten thousand"—or maybe it was ten million; Leonora could not remember when she reviewed the question a little later—"babies die before they are a year old in our one city! And why? Because of impure milk! What we need is more milk stations. You know of the work of our milk committee, of course?"

Leonora was politely eager to be informed of it, at any rate. The zealot's story made her shudder. Certainly she would join the committee! Certainly she would call a meeting at her house of the women in her neighborhood and her set, to hear the moving tale the zealot and other zealots had to tell.

"It's all very pretty," said one of Leonora's acquaintances, the last thrilled listener to the horrific story of impure milk's depredations was departing from Leonora's first parlor meeting, with the very latest pamphlet on the subject rolled up in her muff, "it's all very pretty to talk about milk stations, and selling certified milk to the poor mother for two cents a gallon, or thereabouts, and all that. But the truth is that no impure milk should ever be allowed to enter the city. Our inspection is very inadequate—horribly so. Our inspectors are politicians' henchmen. Do you suppose that would be so if women had the ballot?"

Leonora held the desired view upon the question. Of course, if women had any governmental power at all, they would take care that little children were not ex-

posed to all sorts of danger, physical and moral.

"It all seems so futile to me," sighed the suffragist friend, "this trying to remedy things from the outside. We have no real power to bring about reforms. What would render all this unnecessary is to give women the vote. By the way, you are a member of the organization, of course?"

Leonora blushingly admitted that she was not, and offered in excuse the extenuating circumstances of her children, her years abroad with Edward, and the like. She avowed a desire to join the organization at once. And three days later she found that she was on the ways and means committee of the Woman Suffrage Association of her town.



"Do you suppose that would be so if women had the ballot?"

It is not necessary to chronicle the steps by which she became a member of other bodies, all of high and worthy aims. This is not designed to be a study of the rise and progress of a public woman, but a brief inquiry into the condition that confronts a lady who aspires to be both a semipublic and a private character.

Leonora's mail, which had once consisted of the monthly accounts, cards to milliners' openings, tailors' announcements, five or six pleasant invitations a week, a letter from her mother on Monday morning, three or four letters from friends or traveling neighbors in the course of a month, now became something to make the postman on the beat wish that the art of chirography had never been invented, and that Gutenberg had never lived. Reports, pamphlets, summons to regular meetings, to special meetings, requests for money, petitions that she would act as patroness, more requests for money—these made up a large weekly mail sack.

The pigeonholes of Leonora's ladylike desk bulged, overflowed, proved totally inadequate to the task laid upon them. The polite little silver-bound engagement calendar which had handsomely sufficed for such jottings as "Tuesday—dinner and bridge at Thompsons'. Friday—dressmaker, eleven; Jenny's luncheon at one-thirty. Saturday—matinée, Dolly," grew ridiculous. She bought a "daily reminder," almost as thick as an unabridged dictionary, where every day in the year was divided into thirteen working hours, and each hour, from eight in the morning until nine at night, had a line all its own for its engagement.

But the purchase of this imposing volume, although it served for many domestic jests, did not end Leonora's troubles. She was not, to be sure, quite so liable to accept an invitation to pour tea on the afternoon when she had to attend a meeting of the investigating committee of the Consumers' League as she had been before; she did not so often arrange to have her hair shampooed at the hour sacred to the discussion of problems connected with the

Delinquent Girls' School; she did not appoint the day of the settlement's managers' monthly meeting for a long, peaceful visit with her mother-in-law as frequently as in the days of the silver-rimmed engagement calendar.

But life was still overcrowded, confused, breathless. When Leonora, Junior, developed a belated case of mumps, and thereby quarantined her mother from the world of committee meetings for ten days, Leonora, Senior, said in the depths of her guilty heart that she was glad of it; and a line beginning to appear upon her forehead temporarily departed.

But mumps, except in very ill-regulated families, where a long line of children have the irritating habit of waiting, each one, for the last day of the preceding one's illness before "coming down" themselves, seldom provide a way of escape from civic duty for an indefinite period. Leonora's brief time of rest passed, and once more she took up the white woman's burden.

From her dressing room she moved out a shirt-waist chiffonier made of rose-and-blue-bird cretonne, and she put in its stead an unornamental, square, flat-topped oak desk. On the top of that she arranged boxes and files. Each letter file bore its label—"Suffrage," "Milk Committee," "Settlement," "Fresh-air Week," or whatnot. The boxes contained card catalogues with names and addresses, and a line of description upon them—Leonora had reached the stage of humanitarian activity where a mere address book was almost as ill-adapted to her requirements as a sedan chair would have been to her peregrinations.

It had been Leonora's pious custom during all the years of her married life to arise in the morning, make herself fair in negligee and breakfast cap, breakfast with her husband and children, and send them forth to their respective duties with a smile and a kiss to remember.

She began to find that things were otherwise now. Some mornings she could not bring herself to rise—the day before had been so crowded, so weary-



On those mornings she had her coffee and her mail in bed, and bestowed the farewell kiss from her pillows.

ing with committee after committee, with lessons in parliamentary law—one must know the rules of orderly procedure if one undertakes to work in co-operation with other people!—with tea and dinner and the theater—for, of course, one is conscientious, and does not desire to deprive one's husband of his olden recreations.

On those mornings she had her coffee and her mail in bed, bestowed the farewell kiss from her pillows, and felt a faint undercurrent of worry all the forenoon because of the haunting suspicion that her last glimpse of the space behind the ears of Edward, Junior, had revealed a guilty darkness. For these mornings, when she "rested," Leonora had had the telephone extended to a stand by her bedside.

The other mornings saw her at the breakfast table, as of old, except that instead of the fetching garments of past days, she wore tailored suits and hats,

walking boots, and a perturbed frown. She had to "make" a ten-o'clock meeting of the Woman's Civic Improvement Society, the Heights Branch, or one of the Kindergarten Association.

Now, Edward, Senior, had been quiescent under all this; it required, of course, two or three years to bring Leonora's civic activities to this point. He had been indulgent, according to the excellent American habit; moreover, he had always been as proud of Leonora's brains as of her good looks, and he was rather pleased than otherwise to see them put to some use, beyond the purely domestic, in the community, and still again, he regarded it as the incontestable duty of every family of standing in the city to do some work for the city—and Leonora's interest left him free to devote all his own attention to his business. She was his deputy, as it were. Philanthropy was an admirable occupation for ladylike leisure.

So he had been, still according to the American precedent, half proud, half amused, wholly content; until one day when Leonora's boot, inopportunistically displayed, showed a heel run down and a button missing. Edward spoke out, frankly and freely, on the subject. Leonora apologized, and excused herself on the ground that she simply hadn't had time to attend to the matter.

"I thought Katie attended to that sort of thing for you," objected Edward, Katie being the housemaid, who was supposed to be also capable of the elementary work of a ladies' maid, of sewing on shoe buttons, brushing clothes, carrying garments to the mender's.

"She's so sloppy and forgetful," murmured Leonora.

"Why don't you get rid of her, then?" was Edward's not unnatural inquiry.

And his wife explained that she knew she ought to do so, but she really hadn't had time to see about a new girl.

"Besides, Katie is so good and trustworthy that I hate to discharge her, and run the risk of getting some one who might be bad-tempered or dishonest or disloyal. What I ought to do is to keep her, and to have a good seamstress or a sort of maid come in once or twice a week to keep us mended up."

Edward made a speculative sound in his throat. It was not acquiescent, though it was not altogether forbidding. Leonora said no more on the subject then.

At the end of the week he came home

one evening with a large, delighted smile on his face. Uncle Joe was coming to town, would be there the very next morning—Uncle Joe, who had never seen a larger metropolis than Cuddam Corners, and whom they—Edward and Leonora—had so often besought to visit them.

"But why," cried the dismayed Leonora, "didn't he give us any warning? I have simply not got a free minute to-morrow—and, of course, you'll want me to meet him?"

She ended her sentence hopefully, but Edward responded with a decided "Of course!"

"If he had only let us know!" wailed Leonora.

"But country people so often don't. They don't realize about crowded city days," said Edward comfortably.

Edward had no intention of leaving his law office to meet Uncle Joe, or of disarranging his crowded city day in any way. That was one of the things for which—unconsciously—he had married; to have

some one to bear the unavoidable interruptions of the day for him.

Leonora met Uncle Joe, of course; but for the first time she felt sullenly critical of that worthy agriculturist.

She had something the same sort of resentment when one of her "native" summer neighbors achieved the distinction of a serious illness, necessitating removal to a city hospital, and an operation there. Of course, the good neighbors at Crescent Beach had been sure that the Edward-Leonora family would be all that was friendly to the



Edward spoke out, frankly and freely, on the subject.

sick person. Weren't Edward and Leonora always as cordial as possible at the Beach? Hadn't young Edward and young Leonora had their first lessons in swimming, and in sail craft, and in lobstering, from the members of the sick person's family?

And Leonora, with lips set in a grim, depressed line, journeyed up to the hospital every other day with the appropriate offerings of flowers and books. And inwardly she said that it was a perfect shame that she should be expected to do anything of the sort. Wasn't the Tuberculosis Exhibit, which one of her committees was about to hold, a far more important thing than any sentimental, neighborly courtesy? She hadn't time for such civilities any longer!

Neither did she have time for the idle day of intercourse that Flora wanted with her to-morrow. Flora had been gadding over Europe for four or five years, and had come home free of all ties but the light—the almost negligible—ties of old friendship, of old social affiliations. It was most inconsiderate of Flora to ask a busy woman like her, Leonora, to spend a whole afternoon in the frivolous visiting in which they used to indulge years before. And it was worse than inconsiderate—it was absurd and unkind—of Flora to be injured in her feelings because Leonora had made it apparent that she couldn't waste an afternoon in any such fashion.

She put the whole matter to Edward one evening, when she needed the outlet of speech for her smoldering resentments.

"What do you think?" she demanded, when they were beginning their soup. "I had a letter from Caroline to-day, and she actually wants me to come and pay her a visit!"

"Going?" inquired Edward briefly.

The children had been invited out to supper, and were thus providentially absent, so that their parents could discourse unhampered by that respect for their juvenile ears, which is such a drawback to intimate adult conversation.

"Going?" echoed Leonora. "Now,

what a question! You know perfectly well that I can't leave town for three consecutive days for the next two months."

"Caroline was your maid of honor," observed Edward reflectively, and Leonora reddened as one who hears a criticism.

"I am quite aware of it," she replied haughtily. "But that doesn't alter the fact that we're having a Tuberculosis Exhibit for the next two weeks, and that I'm on the committee of arrangement; or that the Civic Association is planning——"

"Never mind what the Civic Association is planning, Leonora," interrupted her husband. "Never mind about the suffrage rally next week, or the milk station next month, or the settlement's desire for a new gymnasium, with all the work that that will put upon you. Are you going to pour for little Mrs. Mead next week?"

"Her reception is on the day of the opening of the bazaar for the sale of the work of the Blind Home. I'm patroness, and must be there," explained Leonora.

"I thought so." It was seldom that Edward used in the home circle the dry, unsympathetic voice which he now employed. It was almost never that Edward appeared in the rôle of Man, the Master. Consequently when he did he was vastly more effective than if he had been in the habit of making the part a daily commonplace. "I think, my dear Leonora, that you have reached the point where it will be well to call a halt, and review the situation. How many hours a week do you devote to your civic activities? How many to your friends?"

"It will be possible for me to tell you when I have had Miss Lansing go over my engagement calendar for the past year," said Leonora haughtily still—more haughtily, in fact. Miss Lansing was the twice-a-week secretary she had set up in addition to her twice-a-week maid-seamstress.

"You needn't," said Edward. "Without the precise data, we both know perfectly well that you have gone into this

civic business with so much violence that there is no time left for anything else. Oh, I'm not complaining of your housekeeping, or of the way in which you do manage to squeeze an hour or two a week for me and the children. You've been quite remarkable in that way. Some women wouldn't even see their children, I dare say."

"You're not in the least amusing, you know," interrupted Leonora.

"I wasn't aiming to be. I was only aiming to say that in the three years—or is it four? Four? Thank you—since you first fell a victim to an aggravated case of civic conscience, you had been gradually coming to the place where your days are as unelastic as a bond slave's. And some one in the house has to have an elastic day. You are on the job as ceaselessly as a telephone central."

"But I prefer to be doing something real and worth while to wasting my time in what you call pleasure!" interrupted Leonora.

"My dear," said Edward solemnly, "that is the most serious symptom of your disease. If you still felt defrauded of pleasure because you couldn't go to visit your old bridesmaids, or because you couldn't spend the day embroidering with your college chums, I shouldn't be worried about you. But you've come to regard—you've almost come to regard—mere friends, mere friendly acquaintances, as nuisances. You've almost come to think of these utterly inelastic, system-scheduled days of yours as admirable, as normal. If you can't rearrange things somewhat, my dear, if you can't get the vote, and improve the poor, and regenerate the worthless, without becoming rigid yourself—the ballot, and the poor, and the vicious, may all go hang! For do you know what I'll do unless you adopt a new system—one which allows a little room for the play of casual, by-the-way sentiment?"

Leonora professed herself anxious to hear what he would do.

"I haven't quite made up my mind," he admitted. "It may be to dismiss the servants, and make you into a domestic paragon again by forcing plenty of housework upon you; or it may be—Oh, an affinity or something!"

"You needn't be vulgar!" said Leonora.

Nevertheless, when he asked her if she would care to go to the theater that night, she accepted promptly, and later he heard her telephone her secretary "not to come over this evening; to-morrow, perhaps. I'll let you know."

For although Leonora, being an American wife, did not take the threats of her husband as anything other than rather poor samples of domestic humor, she was a woman of brains. She saw that there was something in his contention. She saw that it is essential that at least one member of the domestic copartnership should have elastic days—days capable of a reasonable expansion to allow the haphazard claims of friendship, the haphazard demands of unscheduled duties. She was also able to perceive that the person chiefly benefited thus far by her many virtuous activities was herself; and she was able to reason that she would benefit equally from fewer of them.

"There is such a thing as 'going the pace' even in philanthropy," she wrote to the next person who begged her to serve for a season upon a board or a committee, "and I don't know but its effects are as baleful as going the pace in other directions. At any rate, I've curtailed my activities, and out of the multitude of things in which I am more or less interested, I have kept the two or three in which I am the most interested. And so I am renewing my acquaintance with lots of pleasant people who had been gradually crowded out of my existence in the last three years—including my husband and my children."





THE FIGHTING DOCTOR

By

Helen R. Martin

Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "The Crossways," "When Half-Gods Go," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

In the town of Webster, Pennsylvania, Doctor Thorpe comes to establish himself among the Pennsylvania Dutch. He finds there a big system of graft, under a ringleader named Mike Goodman. The doctor seeks to abolish this, and to improve the place, especially insisting upon good roads. Goodman's niece, Mollie Graeff, a pretty young girl who has received a good education, is the village schoolmistress. The doctor, not understanding her or the situation, plans to oust her, and to put in a man teacher, some college graduate.

CHAPTER VIII.

MOLLIE was at a loss to know what to do about it when again the next morning Jake Schmidt presented himself at school, took his seat, and, in spite of the fact that he continued to be ignored, persistently came up with his class whenever it was called.

"At least nothing can be done *to-day*," she decided, for it was the momentous election day, and not a soul within a radius of many miles had a thought for anything but the absorbing struggle between the two opposing factions, Doctor Thorpe and Mike Goodman. That the contest would be close, especially now that Jake Schmidt, Senior, had deserted the doctor's side, every one knew, and excitement was tense and high. No such interest had ever before been felt in an election in this community.

Mollie herself was not without an impersonal and nonpartisan curiosity as to the outcome. Indeed, by evening,

she was almost as eager as any voter in the township to get to the store, where the voting had taken place that morning, to learn of the result when she called for her mail, for the store was also the post office.

From every fence corner Doctor Thorpe's hugely lettered placards jumped at one's eyesight:

**HELP WEBSTER TOWNSHIP TO GET
BETTER ROADS!**

**REMEMBER YOUR FRIENDS! TURN
YOUR BACK ON YOUR ENEMIES!**

**BETTER ROADS FOR THE SAME
TAXES!**

WEBSTER TOWNSHIP ON THE JOB!

The lane on either side of the store was crowded for some distance with vehicles, and Mollie saw at a glance that never before had the township so turned out for an election. In the dense crowds surrounding the store, she recognized some farmers who had come a very long distance that day to

cast a vote for or against the improvement of the roads.

A lot of them, she knew, must surely have been converted en route, for, if anything under heaven *could* break down their Dutch obstinacy against road improvement, it would be the remarkable difference they had found, on their way here, between the roads over which Doctor Thorpe's road drag had been used and those stretches of road where it had not been used.

The crowds were shouting lustily as she drew near. She managed to learn from a man on the outskirts of the throng that the votes were, at this moment, being counted, and that so far Mike Goodman's candidate was five ahead, but, even as he spoke, another and lustier shout went up.

"Doctor Thorpe ten to the good! Hurrah for Thorpe and good roads! Ten ahead fur the doc! Down with graft in Webster!"

Mollie found the excitement rather infectious; she could not go home until she knew the end, though she saw she could not get near the store for her mail. The alternate advance of the doctor and Mike Goodman's man—the doctor at one moment being four or five ahead, then Mike's man again to the fore—kept the crowd fairly jumping with eager interest.

"Mike's man's got it, all right!" her informant, a friend of her uncle's, assured her. "Doctor Thorpe couldn't down Mike Goodman! Well, I guess, anyhow, *not!*"

Up to the time of the school-board meeting last night, Mollie had felt but a mild interest in the township controversy over the roads, but now it occurred to her to wonder on what grounds any voter could hesitate before a plain choice between improved roads and honesty on the one hand and bad roads and graft on the other.

"It is simply that you cannot convince a Pennsylvania German that what his fathers had isn't better than anything they did not have. He thinks muddy roads an ordinance of God, and you're interfering with Providence when you use a road drag."

"Six ahead for Mike Goodman!" came the bulletin, and the crowd—or part of it—cheered wildly.

"But even if he is defeated," Mollie mused, "I don't believe he'll ever give up. He'll try it again next year! Win, or die trying, seems to be his creed," she sighed, as she thought with a deepening despair of his opposition to herself.

"Doctor Thorpe four ahead!" was the next announcement.

She saw the doctor's car in the road, and he himself in his inevitable duster and cap was the center of a group on the porch in front of the store.

"They must be near through now," she heard some of the men saying, and there was no other bulletin for some time.

When at length the storekeeper himself came forth to announce the final result, the suspense of the multitude was agonizing.

"Doctor Thorpe wins the election for road supervisor by a majority of twenty-five."

A deafening shout went up from one portion of the crowd, while the other portion looked suddenly as limp as clothes hanging on a wash line. Mollie felt her knees shaking under her, and she mocked at her own perturbation over a thing which in reality concerned her so little.

The cheering continued long, and at length became a cry for "A speech! A speech!" which kept up until Doctor Thorpe's stepping forth into view brought a silence as sudden as it was deep.

"To you who have elected me to your board of road supervisors, I promise that you shall have good roads and *no more graft!* [Applause.] If we must blast out rock to make drainage gutters beside our roads, why, we'll blast it out—and we won't wait to talk about it! What *you* have to do is to educate public opinion in this township. Get as many good, live people as you can to travel over your roads, with the purpose of comparing them with neglected roads in other districts. Get newspaper men here, automobile clubs, influential

men from the Lebanon Board of Trade, for every business man in town knows that the better the roads leading to town, the oftener will the wives and daughters of the farmers visit their shops. [Laughter.]

"Fellow citizens, your supervisors are going to *work* and talk—in the order named.

"In conclusion"—the doctor's voice became solemnly impressive—"let us

ment of a tired man taken at a disadvantage and unprepared. "If I had known he couldn't get up anything better than that in the way of a speech, I might have offered to write him one! To let him know that though I am 'a native' and not 'a cultured city woman' nor the 'fresh outside life' he thinks so desirable, yet if I had the chance to make a speech to this township, it would not be the lame affair his was!"



The cheering continued long, and at length became a cry for "A speech! A speech!"

make the improvement of our country earth roads a philanthropic religion! Fellow citizens, I thank you."

He backed through the crowd into the store, and disappeared.

Mollie, with a vague pity for the bitter anger and disappointment she knew her uncle must now be enduring, turned away, and walked toward home.

"It will be a harder fight than ever between them, now that Doctor Thorpe is on the board of supervisors," she mused. "His 'speech' was certainly not brilliant!" She shrugged, her fear of him making her merciless in her judg-

CHAPTER IX.

When again on the day after the election, Jake Schmidt came to school, still insubordinate, Mollie saw that she must take some step to settle the matter, but what to do was not easy to decide. An appeal to Jonas Herr, or Hiram Unger, or any other member of the board, was useless; they all lived at a distance from the school; their time was too valuable to be spent to so little advantage to themselves; and every one of them would think, as the doctor had pointed out to them, that, if she could

not manage her own "job" without their help, she was a failure.

"If Uncle Mike were a man, he could help me; but he would be afraid to stand up to a big fellow like Jake."

Suddenly it occurred to her that she could write to the county superintendent. He was a very young man, and Mollie was quite too feminine not to have recognized when, a few days ago, he had paid his semiannual visit to her school, that his interest in it had been less pedagogical than human.

"He could deal with Jake *officially*—and I think he'd be delighted to do it, seeing it's for me! If there's any doubt about it—well, I am sure I can land him by subscribing for that funny *School Journal* he edits. I'll suggest that this story of Jake Schmidt would make good copy for his helpful and instructive *Journal*. Aha! You're subtle, Mollie!"

She meant to send her letter, inclosing the price of a year's subscription for the *Journal*, the moment school was dismissed at noon. But at ten o'clock the sound of an automobile thumping outside the schoolhouse sent the color flying to her cheeks and her heart to bounding.

"It's Roosevelt," she thought, "coming to do his whole duty as a school director and inspect my work! And it's the day for Civil Government! Oh, Lord!"

Doctor Thorpe, wearing his linen duster and carrying his cap, walked into the room without waiting for an answer to his knock at the door. Yesterday's excitement was not yet so dead but that he still presented, to the girls hardly less than to the boys, the aspect of a conquering hero, and every pair of eyes in the schoolroom devoured him as he moved across the room and stepped upon the platform.

"Good morning," he greeted the teacher, as he drew off his glove and offered his hand.

Mollie, endeavoring to assume the manner she usually deemed judicious in the presence of school officials, primly invited him to "be seated."

"Thank you," he responded, and she

saw, with indignation, that he looked amused, as they both sat down before the staring school, the doctor's head just reaching to the frame of the motto which hung behind him:

Thorough Knowledge is Valuable. Diligence is its Price.

Mollie leaned forward, and touched her bell. "Attention!" she said, in a tone so professional that the startled children at once, as one man, bent to their work.

"There!" she exulted. "He can't say *now* that I haven't good discipline!"

She swiftly decided to postpone the Civil Government lesson scheduled for this half hour, and to take, in its place, a subject she knew something about.

But before she could carry out this Machiavellian plot, the doctor interposed.

"Are you busy just now? Or may I talk with you?"

"I am always busy. But I can dispose of the class I meant to call up. I can give them topics at the blackboard. Then I shall be free for a while."

"By all means, then, give them 'topics at the blackboard,' if you will be so obliging."

Mollie rapidly assigned "topics," and the pupils took their places about the room to write.

"Now, then," he said, when she sat down beside him, "I see that Jake Schmidt is here. Then he submitted, of course?"

"No, indeed, he did not. I meant to speak to you about it before you left."

"You mean to tell me he is here without having done what you required?"

"Yes, he is."

"But why haven't you let me know?" he exclaimed. "Surely you have not given in to him?"

"Oh, no!"

"He comes and sits here all day without reciting to you?"

"Yes. He comes up to all his classes, and I never speak to him."

"How did you mean to settle the thing eventually?" he curiously inquired.

"I meant either to appeal to the county superintendent or——"

"Yes?" he urged, as she hesitated.

"Or to write and ask you," she said, her dark eyes looking dreamy, "whether you couldn't manage to run Jake down with your car. I don't see how else to get rid of him. He wouldn't be any loss to any one," she explained. "He is as much of a bother to his parents as he is to me."

"I'd oblige you, but it might damage my car. There's a less expensive way of disposing of Jake. First, however, why did you think of appealing to the county superintendent, who is in Lebanon, when I am right here on the job?"

"So much 'on the job,'" she answered, the color flying to her face, "that you think my inability to manage Jakey Schmidt by myself is proof conclusive that I am unfit for the position."

"That does not alter the fact that so long as you do hold the position, you shall have my help when you need it," he gravely answered. "You'll have no more trouble with Jakey Schmidt after this morning. With your permission, I shall now proceed," he said grimly, "to deal with Jakey!"

"I wouldn't be Jakey!"

The doctor, without rising or lifting his voice above a conversational tone, addressed Jake Schmidt at the back of the room.

"Jacob! Here!"

Instantly the school became delightfully alert, and Jake, after an instant's sullen hesitation, rose and shuffled up the aisle to the platform.

"Jacob, you will make your choice now—instantly; you'll do what Miss Graeff requires of you, or you'll go home to stay. Now, then? Which will you do?"

"I ain't apologizin' to no nigger!"

"You have chosen. Now, take your belongings and go home. And don't show yourself here again on peril of a sound thrashing."

"You ain't my boss! Pop said if you butted in and tried to lick me, he'd have you sued for salt and batter! My

pop, he pays taxes, and he says I got to git educated *whether* or no!"

The doctor drew out his watch.

"If you're not out of here in five minutes, you'll get your salt and batter this morning, Jake."

"Pop said I *darsen't* come home!"

Jake nearly bawled, his face red from his sense of the awkwardness of his predicament. "I'm to bluff it out to the finish, he says, or *he'll* lick me!"

"You haven't much time to lose—four minutes!" the doctor warned, his watch in his hand.

Jake shuffled from one foot to another. It seemed that a thrashing confronted him whichever of the two ways he turned.

"Three minutes," the doctor announced.

Jake knew that not only would his father half kill him if he dared to apologize to "that nigger," but he would force him to go to school, no matter *what* Doctor Thorpe threatened. His father would be glad if Thorpe did "lick" him, so eager he was for an excuse to "go to law agin' him." On the other hand, if he refused to apologize to Eva Johnson and in the morning came to school, Doctor Thorpe would certainly "do him up." In such a fix what was a poor devil to do?

"One minute!"

The doctor rose, and towered over him. He was a powerful-looking man. The whole township knew how he had "laid out" Jim Weitzel when Jim attacked him for "spoiling" the road near his place with a road drag.

"I'll 'ologize!" Jake growled.

"Very well. Step up here on the platform. Now, then," as Jake stepped up, "first to Eva Johnson, then to Miss Graeff, then to the school."

Jake began an inaudible mumbling, but the doctor stopped him.

"Speak up! Make yourself heard, young man, as you were heard when you accused a pupil here of theft and defied your teacher."

Completely cowed now, Jake lifted his voice, and bawled forth the words necessary to save him at least from the



"I'll 'pologize!" Jake growled.

brawny arm of the doctor. His father would have to be reckoned with later.

When it was over, and the youth, in deep humiliation, had taken his seat, the doctor, without loss of time, turned his attention to the "topics" on the blackboard. Leaving the platform, he strolled about the room to read what the pupils were writing. The subject appeared to be United States History.

"Oh, heavens!" thought Mollie. "If he judges me by their *written* English! They recite so much better than they write. And he can't possibly understand the awful difficulties I have to contend with in their English."

She anxiously followed his eyes as he read, her heart sinking as she felt what he must be thinking of such work.

Washington, having landed under Cambridge Elm, had yet fourteen thousand men. Some were drilled and some were not. Some were worn out during the war and some were poorly clothed. The soldiers each got

an ammunition. The ammunition got all of the Americans.

The second continental congress met in Philadelphia. They voted to give them twenty thousand men, and they now sent Connel Washington and King George III. They were sent over to help them to fight, if it were not for them they would not come alive any more. They also wrote a letter to King George and he declared to receive it.

News that American blood had been shed spread like wild fire. Putnam, without changing his working clothes, mounted his horse and rode about one hundred miles, to farmers and also cities and towns. Soon the power of the governors had given Massachusetts to Georgia.

As the doctor was reading this latter strange statement, Mollie rose, and went to his side.

"Now to show you, doctor, that this pupil's difficulty lies not in her ignorance of the facts, but in her inability to express herself in writing English. Kate"—she addressed the writer—"what

do you mean when you say that 'the power of the governors had given Massachusetts to Georgia'?"

The girl turned from the board. "The power of them royal governors it was broke all along the coast from Massachusetts down to Georgia yet."

"You see," Mollie explained, as together they returned to the platform and sat down, "English is really a foreign language to them. You know the language spoken in at least one-half the homes of the township is the Pennsylvania German, and, when the children come here to school at the age of six, they don't know a word of English."

"Strange, isn't it," returned the doctor, "that so many generations of these people could live in an English-speaking land and not learn the language?"

"Do you want to see," asked Mollie, opening her desk and taking out some folded sheets of writing paper, "a few samples of their attempts at written

English—notes the pupils bring me from their parents?"

"I certainly do!"

She opened one of them, and he leaned toward her to read it with her.

Dear Teacher Sally could not come to school these three weeks back because she had the information of the bowels and ammonia yet.

HER MOTHER.

"This poor boy," she said, as she opened a second sheet, "I believe was a patient of yours."

Teacher. Pleas egskuse Henry fur not comeing in school as he died from the car ron-over on Tuesday. By doing so you will greatly oblige his loving mother.

"You know," she remarked, as she took up a third, "I have introduced a little physical culture into the day's work here—to the indignation of those who always oppose any innovation on sight. Read this!"

He took it from her, and read:

Dear Miss Teacher. You must stop teach my Lizzie fysical torture she needs yet reading and figures mit sums more as that. If I want her to do jumpin' I kin make her jump.

At this point, the history class, having taken their seats, a small boy waved his hand, and asked:

"Can't I clean the blackboards? Ain't I can't?"

Mollie nodded, then asked her visitor:

"Would you like to hear one of the younger reading classes, made up entirely of children who knew no English to start with and who have had only a few months of schooling—two months last winter and two months this fall with me?"

The doctor expressed his curiosity to hear the class, and it was called.

In her interest in the lesson that followed, Mollie, quite forgetting to be pedagogical, taught with a natural and eager animation.

"What is this lesson about, Lizzie?"

"What about is it?" repeated the small girl. "About a feedler, is it."

"What is a fiddler?"

"He plays wis his *wi-lin*."

"Spell that word."

"*Wi-lin*. We-i-o-l-i-n. *Wi-lin*."

"Violin," Mollie distinctly pro-

nounced the word. "John next. John, you may tell me the story of this fiddler."

John girded up his loins, as it were, and in a loud voice launched forth:

"A feedler was so lonesome, he did a toon on his *wi-lin* to draw to him a companion. And what did come to him? A fox did come. Is this the companion I want? It ain't. He makes the fox tight wis a rope. So he is going on now—ain't it?" he paused to demand of the teacher.

"Yes, John."

"He did another toon a'ready. And what comes now? A *wolf*! Is *this* the companion I want? It ain't. He makes tight the wolf yet, too. A hare then did follow him. It ain't beasts I want fur a companion. And he makes tight that hare—and goes on his way doing another toon. So all them beasts make theirselves loose and have a rage."

"What does rage mean?"

"It means they would feel angry, is it? And had much mad over that feedler?"

"Yes," agreed Mollie.

"So the beasts follow him, but a woodsman comes and drives off them beasts."

"Now, you see," said Mollie presently, when the class had been dismissed, "when spoken English is so difficult, what it is to these children to try to write it."

"Yes," he nodded. "And you," he added, turning a keen look upon her. "This school is a pretty tough proposition, isn't it? Do you *like* your work?"

"As the catechism says," she answered demurely, "I try to do my duty in that station in life to which it hath pleased God to call me. But I should be glad if He'd see His way clear to giving me a better 'job'! Still, my only serious objection to this school—"

She hesitated, looking at him doubtfully. "You could use it against me!"

"It would be rash of you indeed to furnish the enemy with weapons!" he returned, with what Mollie thought a mocking smile.

"Well," she said, with a long breath,

"not to deceive you, it's that brutal Civil Government I have to teach. I'm meditating a lecture on 'What I Don't Know About Civil Government.' If only you'd use your Rooseveltian influence to have the subject removed from the curriculum! I'm so dazed and bored with caucuses, and primaries, and other low-down devices for entrapping the young and unwary! I'll write a tract against them!"

"But what shall you do about it when women are given the suffrage?"

"You don't mean to say you're going to introduce the Suffrage Movement into Webster Township!"

"No, I'll stick to road supervising. What this township needs is not wider suffrage, but a czar, until they've learned how to elect decent rulers for themselves and—excuse me!" he broke off, realizing he was becoming personal. "I forgot you're not interested in Civil Government. And I've been here too long!"

He slowly rose, and held out his hand.

"If you get into any more trouble, you don't need to send for Kupp; send for me."

"Thank you," said Mollie, with dignity, not to say hauteur, as she gave him her hand.

"Good morning," he nodded, and went away abruptly.

"I suppose," he mused, as he rode off in his car, "quite apart from her inevitable resentment toward me on her own account, she's too fond of that old duffer, Mike, not to hate me! If she were any one else but Mike Goodman's niece, and if I were not under the disagreeable necessity of putting her out of her position, I declare it might be pleasant to have one really companionable acquaintance out here; I have a suspicion she might be really companionable if one could get to know her—and could overcome one's prejudice to such blood. What I'd like to find out is how she came by that manner she has. Why, everything about her is what the vulgar-minded call 'good form.' Yet Mike Goodman and his spouse reared her! I'll be driven

to demand an explanation of her one of these days. In her simple life out here and at Kutztown, what could there ever have been to have given her that look she has as of one who, young as she is, has wrestled with Fate; has really felt and thought?"

He fell to wondering why she submitted to the discipline of such strenuous work as that school demanded of her, when it was not a matter of necessity with her.

"I have certainly got the impression from Susan and others that Mike and his wife indulge and spoil her. So, then, rich as the old rascal is, why does the girl work at all? I wonder!"

CHAPTER X.

When Mollie went home from school that evening, Uncle Mike, meeting her at the door, and evidently having been waiting for her, greeted her with a characteristic look of mingled cunning, glee, and spite, which told her, without word, that he had, by some means she knew not of, again got the whip hand over her and meant to use it.

"You hurry on in; I got to speak somepin to you!"

She followed as he led the way, to her surprise, into the parlor. Mike seldom went into the parlor voluntarily. He did not feel at ease or at home anywhere but in the kitchen.

"Why in here, Uncle Mike? Is it something you don't want Aunt Louisa to hear?"

"There's strangers out back. We eat three strangers fur dinner, and we're got one fur supper—a *lady* yet! No such a common agent, neither! A wonderful stylish townner, she is. I don't know what fur business she's got out here. And her we got to sleep fur one night, too!"

"But who?" Mollie's astonished voice asked, for Mike and his wife never had visitors.

He had closed the door cautiously, and now he faced her, with his look of spiteful cunning intensified. The venom accumulated in his soul since his humiliating defeat at the hands of Doc-

tor Thorpe seemed suddenly all turned upon *her*, as though glad of an outlet.

"You thought you were so smart, Mollie, ain't? But now you'll think again oncet! No *more* settin' 'round readin' books, still, instead of helpin' with the work, my fine lady! Ha, ha!" he laughed, in keenest enjoyment of the situation. "It's get up at five o'clock now, and work till school time, and help at dinner time, and after school till bedtime—or it's git out! See?"

"Then you want me to go to the hotel?"

"The *hotel*! Ha, ha! The *hotel* yet! The *hotel*, it's quarantined! They got a case of smallpox over there! Yes, smallpox yet! And till it's over a'ready, we're a-goin' to eat and sleep the strangers that comes. And," he added, fixing her with his small eyes, "you got to help with the work—see?—or git out! And where would you *go* to? That's the point—where you'd go *to*! Ha!"

"What wages do you offer me for helping you with your work?"

"Wages? Ha! Wages, yet! Wages to you that I raised! What would I pay you wages fur, heh?"

"For doing your work. I certainly shall not do it without wages, or a reasonable reduction in the price of my board."

"Well, now look a-here, Mollie, you ain't a-goin' to git a cent of wages, and you're a-goin' to help with the work and pay your board in full, or you're leavin'! Now, do you understand that? You know me—that I don't speak what I don't mean. You work or you go. And where'll you go *to*? That's where I got you. Where'll you go *to*?"

"What a toad he is!" Mollie was thinking, as she gazed with a sickening fascination upon his glee over her predicament; for it was indeed a predicament; she did not know a household within miles that would consent to take a boarder. And even those who might have been persuaded were prejudiced against her by the widespread reports—of which she was aware—of her "high-minded and tony ways." Every one would be *afraid* to "sleep and eat"

her. And should she yield so much as her little finger to her uncle in this matter, he would take the whole hand; there would be no limit to his imposing upon her.

"And I got another reckoning with you!" he pursued vindictively. "It's put out that Doctor Thorpe he took your part in that there fuss you had with Jakey Schmidt. It stands to reason he wouldn't of went agin' them Schmidts fur a relation of *mine*—unlest fur *one* reason! You know what that there reason was!"

"Of course, I know."

"To be sure you know. You ain't so damn but what you know. What *only* is it makes a man go agin' his own interests? A woman's prettiness! That's what! It's the *only* thing."

"A sense of justice, a regard for the right, does rule some men, Uncle Mike, though they are not the sort of men you could understand."

"Justice and right be blowed! I tell you he's tryin' to make up to you fur two reasons; one is that you're the sort of female a man takes to, damn it! And the other is, he wants to spite me back by enticin' away even my own family yet. That's his game!"

"But what is your 'reckoning' with me?"

"They say you made so pleasant to him, as if you wasn't even related to *me* yet! They say when he wanted to act sociable to you at the board meetin' the other night, you give him as good as he sent. And that here this morning he went and set in your school a couple hours. And just so's he could get on the right side of you, he bullied Jakey Schmidt into shamin' hisself before the whole school. And that you set there and took it all, that friendly and sociable. You hadn't ought to *speak* to him!" he burst out furiously, taking a menacing step toward her. "And if I ever hear of your makin' up to him again, I'll—"

He stopped short before the steady look of her eyes. She held him for an instant with that steadfast gaze that once or twice before in his life she had found to have an almost uncanny power

over him. Then, without a word, she turned away and quietly walked out of the room.

He made a movement to stop her, but changed his mind.

"She ain't passed her promise yet that she'll help work. But that don't make nothin'; there's nothin' else she *kin* do but obey to me *now*. Ha! It's more fun than I seen this good while a'ready, to bring her down off that there high horse she's been ridin' since she's home from that Kutztown Normal."

Alone in her room, Mollie, looking white and tired, sat down among the cushions of the window seat, which she had herself constructed, to search for a solution of her difficulty.

"That a poor duffer should be so badgered! What is Providence up to with me, anyway? Am I so unregenerate as to need all this chastening?"

For a time, search which way she would, she could see no way out. To allow the hotel quarantine to bring her under her uncle's power—as he fondly thought it must—seemed to her out of the question, if for no other reason than that her school work alone taxed her strength to the utmost. Apart from that, however, she felt she could not come again under the relentless dominance she had struggled so hard to escape, which had made her childhood joyless and would have crushed her womanhood had she not fought, like an animal at bay, to save herself.

"I *must* find a way out of this! If only I had money enough to go away," she sighed. "It is the *want* of money that is the root of all evil!"

She must decide quickly upon the course she would take, for her uncle, realizing how securely he held the whip hand, would not be slow to use it in driving her.

"But there is one thing to which he shall not drive me!" she resolved. "He shall not make me consent to be robbed! I will not both work for him and pay my board."

And with this decision, it occurred to her that there was a way by which she could at least gain a respite. She always paid her board by the month, as

she received her salary. It was now three weeks to pay day. She could, without further discussion, seem to fall in with her uncle's plan and at once take hold of the work. At the end of the month she could deduct from the price of her board the amount she considered her work to be worth. If he then made her leave—well, she would have had three weeks to find some place to go, or some other solution of her difficulty.

No sooner had she reached this conclusion than she rose at once to change her dainty school gown for a working frock, and scarcely had she finished doing so, when her uncle pounded on her door and demanded that she "make open."

"I'm ready," she announced, slipping past him and running down the stairs, for she shrank nervously from the bullying in which she knew he would revel, now that he had the chance. "I'll forestall that," she resolved, "by plunging right into the work. But he will pay for all I do."

"Ha!" he chuckled, as he caught sight of her dark gingham working frock speeding down the stairs. "She seen she couldn't get out of it! Well, that there smallpox sure did come in handy!"

Meantime, Mollie groped her way through the pitch-dark hall leading to the kitchen. One of the reforms she had tried in vain to establish in her uncle's home was open windows to flood the house with light and fresh air, instead of keeping it so air-tight that it might as well have been hermetically sealed. Her aunt even went so far as to hang dark blankets over the shades in some of the rooms to exclude the faint rays that might by chance steal in. Mollie had insisted, however, that she be allowed to keep her own room as she wished it, and also that she be permitted to air and use the parlor at will. This latter permission, she foresaw, would now probably be withdrawn.

She did not find her aunt in the kitchen, but she heard her in the adjoining dining room setting the table.

She began at once to prepare the potatoes and other vegetables that were set out for supper.

No sooner, however, had she seated herself to pare the potatoes, than the sound of voices came to her from the dining room—her aunt's and a stranger's.

"The 'lady boarder'!" she said to herself.

She wondered what in the world a woman could be coming out here for. To be sure, once in a long while a "lady agent" came along with a complexion lotion or a "Life of Roosevelt."

But this woman, her uncle had said, was not an agent.

Suddenly Mollie realized that the voice and accent which she heard in conversation with her aunt seemed to be that of a woman of culture. What could such a person be wanting out here?

That, evidently, was what was troubling the mind of her Aunt Louisa, for now Mollie began to hear their talk distinctly.

"Have you friends out here mebby?" asked Aunt Louisa.



She held him for an instant with that steadfast gaze that once or twice before in his life she had found to have an almost uncanny power over him.

"No."

"Don't you know *no* one out here?"

"No."

"What brang you out, then?"

"The stage."

"You come along with the stage?" persisted Mrs. Goodman, and Mollie, recognizing in her mild, obstinate tone, a curiosity that would not be baffled, felt her sympathy go out to the catechized stranger.

"I came *in* the stage," answered the lady.

"You are from Philadelphia—not?"

"From Philadelphia, yes."

"Did you start right away this morning a'ready from Philadelphia?"

"Yes."

"What was you thinkin' of doin' here?"

"Well—I intend to—I shall visit the school."

"The school? Do you know Kupp, then?"

"Cup?"

"He's the county superintendent of schools."

"Oh! N-no. I don't know him."

"Not? Are you, then, after Dixon's business?"

"And who is Dixon?"

"Dixon, he's our health commissioner."

"No, I'm not working for Dixon."

"Are you single yet?"

"Yet? Yes, Mrs. Goodman, though I know you think it a compromising admission!"

"Och, well," said Aunt Louisa sympathetically, "sometimes, to be sure, husbands are handy to have, but more oftener they're just a wonderful bother. Do you keep a hired girl, that you kin go off, still, this here way?"

"No, I board."

"Board? Then you don't house-keep?"

"No."

"Ain't you *got* no folks?"

"Not in Philadelphia."

"What are you doing when you are at home, still?"

"I am a very busy woman."

There was a pause, while Aunt Louisa—not yet balked, Mollie was sure—thought up a fresh line of attack.

"Is that all your own hair you're wearin'?"

"It is *now*. I've just paid the last installment on it."

"Now, think!" Aunt Louisa murmured thoughtfully. "My niece," she added, "she teaches the school. You kin go with her along over in the morning."

"Ah!"

"But I don't think she'll keep her shob long."

"Her shob? Eh, job? Doesn't she like it?"

"I guess mebbby. I don't know. But it's got put out how she's so tony that way and thinks herself so much since she was to Kutztown Normal—and you know it don't do when one wants to be more than another. Ain't not? She don't make herself common enough."

"Yes?"

"Yes, even with us that raised her since she was little a'ready, she wants to be so much that way."

"Dear me!"

"Yes, anyhow! And here to-day us we heard that she's even makin' up with Doctor Thorpe where used her uncle that mean. Yes, it does beat all, the way our Mollie carries on."

"Doctor Thorpe?" There was a new note in the stranger's voice—a tone of controlled eagerness. "The road-reforming doctor?"

"Yes, him. He acted that mean to mister——"

"Mister who?"

"My mister," answered Aunt Louisa, in a tone of surprise at the stupidity of the question. "Mike Goodman."

"Oh!"

"Yes. Him. Doctor Thorpe, he went 'round talkin' down on mister so outlandish that now mister, he ain't no more the boss of the bunch out here; and mister, he was so used to bein' the boss—why, ever since I know somepin he was boss of the bunch—and he liked it so well, too, that he nearly can't quit. It's got him near sick, havin' to quit. He's so bad in his stom-eeek since. And sometimes he has so mad when he hears how the doctor's gettin' more and more folks on his side, that," Aunt Louisa lowered her voice, "he even goes at cursing! Now, think! Yes, Doctor Thorpe, he certainly did act ugly by mister!"

"Just *how* did Doctor Thorpe get your husband out of power here, Mrs. Goodman?"

The stranger's voice fairly vibrated with eagerness, and Aunt Louisa, glad of so interested a listener, at once entered upon a long, monotonous history of the doctor's sojourn in Webster.

Mollie had finished with the potatoes and had got half through with the turnips before the recital came to an end. She thought the stranger listened with remarkable patience.

"Say," said Aunt Louisa suddenly, "all that that you're writin' down—would you *read* it to me?"

"It's shorthand. I—I have been writin' down the story you've been telling me."

"What fur?"

"I want to remember it. It's a good story."

"Yes, I guess, anyhow!"

"Can you think of anything else in connection with it? With Doctor Thorpe's life out here? Had he means to live before he got into a practice?"

"It seems he had some. Then, to be sure, he gardened some, too. But, ah, he was dumn at that! Why, mind you, he wanted the hired man he kep' to tell him how many bushels of potatoes they was a-goin' to raise on his place. 'That,' says the hired man, 'I am not able to say till the potatoes is in the shed a'ready.' But the doctor he was writin' off a piece for such a magazine, and he wanted to tell in this here piece how many bushels of potatoes he was gettin' off his half acre of land. 'There must be some way,' he says, 'of gettin' at this thing. Now, if your stalks are one foot apart and each stalk produces two big potatoes, that will make a quart, and we can calculate how many bushels to the row.' And, mind you, till the doctor was through countin' he had over three hundred bushels to a half acre yet! You wouldn't think, would you, a body could be so dumn? And him, he wants to be so good educated yet! Are you writin' all that down?"

"Oh, yes," the woman lightly answered. "Do you know any more stories like that about any one—or perhaps some more about this—this doctor?"

"There's a plenty stories to tell about him. He's wonderful comic! There's one about his raisin' parsnips in his garden—you kin take it down if you want. The first dish of them parsnips

that his hired girl cooked wasn't no good, so doctor, he would have it that mebbey they hadn't ought to have been gethered till the first frost a'ready. His hired man, he couldn't tell him whether or no he was right. And doctor, he couldn't ast no one else, fur about that time no one 'round here would *speak* to him, so mad he had 'em with his old road drag. So the next Sunday it happened that he came nosin' into our Sunday school—there ain't nothin' he don't try to nose into!—and he got in just in time to hear the superintendent's remarks; my mister, he's the superintendent."

"Mr. Mike Goodman is the superintendent?"

"Yes. Are you writin' *that* down?"

"Oh—yes. Well, then?"

"Well, Mike, he was just makin' his remarks, and he was sayin' that just as some vegetables need the frost to sweeten 'em, so us we need adversity. With that, up pops the doctor and calls right out in Sunday school: 'There, now, perhaps you can tell me whether parsnips come under that head?' Mike, he conceited the doctor was guyin' him, and he was fur havin' him put out, but the doctor, he apologized, and said that seein' *Mike* on the platform made it not seem like a *Sunday* school, and so he forgit hisself for the minute. Ach, that there doctor, he's a reg'lar diel!"

"So it would seem."

"Well, well, here I'm talkin' so long; and I ain't got my supper laid over yet! You'll have to excuse me now——"

"But first—may I go to my room?"

"To be sure, if you want. I'll give you a room that you kin have to yourself," said Aunt Louisa, in the tone of making a great concession.

"Oh, by all means!" came the answer, with a little laugh. "And when I've freshened up, may I come and sit with you again—in the kitchen or wherever you are?"

"Why, yes, if you so like my company," answered Aunt Louisa, evidently flattered.

When Mollie heard them go out into the hall, she put down her pan of tur-



Mollie had finished with the potatoes and had got half through with the turnips before the recital came to an end.

nips, cautiously opened the hall door, and peeped.

Her aunt carried a lamp, and, following her, was a young woman of about twenty-eight or thirty, well gowned and groomed, and with a face that was, Mollie thought, both refined and intelligent.

"Who and what can she be?" Mollie wondered, as she closed the door and returned to her work. "A woman detective set upon Doctor Thorpe by his enemies out here—Jake Schmidt, Aaron Butz, Uncle Mike, and the rest? But Uncle Mike didn't seem to know who she was. Anyway, Doctor Thorpe

has done nothing they can lay hold of. And they failed when they tried the law against him before."

She was sure that the school visiting was a pretense, a blind. The woman's tone, at the mention of Doctor Thorpe, had betrayed that, for some reason inexplicable as yet, she had come out here to find out something about him.

CHAPTER XI.

That night and the next morning, Mollie saw that her uncle and aunt were so pleased and mollified by the way she was taking hold of the housework that they were not likely to press things too

hard and try to interfere with her in those little personal preferences for cleanliness, light, and fresh air, which they held to be "nothing but airs." To her uncle, the fact that he was making money by taking the hotel boarders; that he was saving the price of "a hired girl"—not only in wages, but in board as well—and that he had so got the upper hand of one who, properly his serf, had dared to defy him—these circumstances combined to give him a sense of well-being and complacency that made him ready to concede a few points, on his part, to his now evidently subdued and chastened niece. Mollie almost

shuddered as she thought of his wrath at the end of the month when she would refuse to pay her board in full.

Miss Jerome, the mysterious "lady boarder," came down to breakfast so late, according to Webster Township standards, that Mollie, having risen at five and worked until half past seven, without pause, sat down at eight, dressed for school, to have her breakfast with the stranger.

Mollie wondered whether the young lady had ever before seen a breakfast just like it. It consisted of an exact repetition of the supper of the previous evening: an upright glass stand of celery, a platter of fried sausage floating in grease, three kinds of pie, pickled red beets, a large glass dish of "pepper slaw," a platter of dried-out, cold boiled meat, a glass dish of bananas, a plate of cookies, and a dish of fried potatoes.

"Your breakfast was ready this good while," Mrs. Goodman explained, as she brought Miss Jerome a cup of coffee from the kitchen. "I begun to bell fur you at seven a'ready; didn't you hear it make? I conceived you'd be down till before eight. That's why I didn't take time to go put on a clean frock when I dirtied this here one by drinkin' coffee out of that there leaky tin cup in the kitchen; I didn't know yet that it leaked; to be sure I noticed the coffee got all, quick; then, here next thing I seen, it was runnin' down my frock! Yi, yi! Such a waste! Well, I bet I won't be drinkin' coffee out of that there tin cup fur dinner, anyhow!"

Miss Jerome scribbled in the notebook which lay open conveniently beside her plate. She and Mollie were observing each other warily, though keenly.

"You're still writin' down, I see," said Aunt Louisa, curiosity fairly oozing from her broad, placid face.

Miss Jerome colored slightly, as she cast a hasty, searching glance upon Mollie.

"I'm making a few notes," she answered casually. "May I trouble you for the cream?"

"It ain't cream. We don't serve cream. It's milk. Our cream we keep fur butter, still. Are you used to *cream* in your coffee, still?"

"It doesn't matter. What does 'still' mean?" she asked, picking up her pencil and glancing at Mollie. "And 'ain't,' the way they use it here, is like the French *n'est ce pas?*"

"Exactly," answered Mollie, realizing that she was being tested. "'Still,'" she added, "means *usually*, as nearly as I can express it in ordinary English."

"Are you a native of this township, Miss Graeff?" Miss Jerome inquired, as she sipped her coffee.

"A 'native'? Oh, yes. I climb a tree when they try to catch me!"

"They?" smiled Miss Jerome. "Who?"

"Civilized foreigners—like you and—Doctor Thorpe, for instance."

"Doctor Thorpe tries to catch you?"

"Your visit here concerns Doctor Thorpe?" Mollie inquired very directly, almost challengingly.

"Ach, no!" Aunt Louisa answered for the lady. "Didn't I tell you yet, Mollie, the lady says she's here to visit your school?"

"Indeed?" said Mollie, such extreme surprise in her voice as to bring a flush of embarrassment to Miss Jerome's face.

"Yes, she's a-goin' along with you, then. You'll have to hurry," Mrs. Goodman added to her guest, "fur it's a good piece-ways to the school. And it looks fur rain, too. Yes, when I went out to the spring house a bit ago, some rain went on me."

"Are you here to visit my school in any official capacity?" Mollie asked, as her aunt, after seeing that she was no longer needed, retired to the kitchen.

"In a sense, yes."

"May I ask in what sense?"

"You do not object to visitors at your school?"

"Certainly not, when—pardon me—we know who they are and why they come."

Miss Jerome hesitated for a perceptible instant, then suddenly looked up at Mollie with a frank smile which

seemed to cast off a mask and take the young teacher into her confidence.

"I see I must be open with you. I'll explain as we walk to the school."

When, in a few minutes, they were on their way, walking briskly over the country road, through the keen November morning, Mollie's eyes were sparkling in spite of her fatigue from the hard work she had done already this morning before her day's work proper had begun, for she felt an exhilaration in this momentary companionship with an educated woman of the world. Until an accidental circumstance like the present revealed it to her, she was not fully conscious of her own intense loneliness.

"I am a newspaper woman, Miss Graeff," her companion explained at once when they were alone. "And I am out here to get the story of Doctor Thorpe's fight for good roads, and incidentally to pick up all the local color possible. You see, the account of the doctor's trial at Lebanon made such good reading that my paper, the *Philadelphia Budget*, sent me here for a 'story.'"

"The school visiting was only a blind, then?"

"Certainly. I shall not go into your school. But I'll walk with you to hear—if you will be so good—all you will tell me of this doctor."

"My aunt's tale to you was entirely one-sided, Miss Jerome. If I give you an unprejudiced account of the matter, will you take my story, and not my aunt's?"

"You champion the doctor?"

"Not at all. I do champion the truth, though. I do not slander."

"I shall be glad to hear you, but your aunt's story was awfully good stuff, Miss Graeff."

"You mean," said Mollie, "you're not going to spoil a good story because the facts give out?"

"You catch my idea."

"But if the truth about the doctor is as interesting as my aunt's garbled yarn, will you, then, keep to the truth?"

"When the truth is interesting, I have no objections to telling it."

"Do all newspaper people have such delicate consciences?"

"Oh, I'd save my conscience in a case like this by simply stating in my article that thus and so was the version given me by the natives. Which would be perfectly true."

"Do you never have any compunctions for those your stories might hurt?"

"But we draw the line at maliciousness."

"How about the effect upon—yourself," asked Mollie, after an instant's hesitation, "of spending your time doing work that serves no use except to feed a vulgar public curiosity; work that is so ephemeral, so shallow? I'm not preaching," she hastily added, catching her companion's sudden keen glance of surprise. "I'm simply curious."

"Newspaper reporters have got to live, you know, as well as other people," answered Miss Jerome. "And, anyway, Miss Graeff, is your own work less ephemeral, less shallow? To what end that is really worth while is any work that *any* one does in a world that is dying at any rate? He who can entertain, who can dope the toiling, drudging masses into a moment's forgetfulness—isn't he about as useful a citizen as your profoundest philosopher or greatest statesman? To what end, to what end, is anything that we do? For my own part, I have no interest in posterity. Let it shift for itself. I'm here for what I, personally, can get out of it."

"But we get nothing out of it if we don't dig deep."

"The deeper we dig, the less we find an ultimate reason for anything. You may find reasons on the surface. You won't find them deeper."

"You *are* a pessimist, aren't you?"

"No, I'm not. I don't blink facts, that's all. I'm *not* a pessimist—I like life! It's lots of fun. You see, I'm older than you are. I've long since passed the age at which an earnest soul feels responsible for the universe. I'm here for a good time."

"But what do you consider 'a good

time'? It all hinges on that. To me it could not consist in slighting what seems to me my highest and best instincts, even though I may not find any ultimate reason for following them. Yet follow them I must—or spiritually die."

"In other words, you think journalism not quite respectable?"

"If I may be frank, it seems a mighty cheap business to me, Miss Jerome."

"And your own work doesn't?"

"Two-thirds of it does. There is a divine element in the other third, however, that leavens the whole loaf. But," said Mollie, suddenly coloring, "you'll think I'm a horrible prig. We are not very far from the schoolhouse now—I'd better commence my story of Doctor Thorpe, or I shan't have time. Oh! Here he comes!"

An automobile came spinning along the road, and the young man steering it lifted his cap as he passed them. Miss Jerome did not fail to note the girl's high color as her bright eyes followed the retreating car; nor had the alert interest in the glance of the young doctor escaped her.

"Here is a story!" thought she. "The strenuous, enterprising, reforming doctor outraging the conservative, rural community—and the pretty and clever young schoolmistress to his defense!"

"So that is he, is it?" she said. "A good-looking chap! Now, for your version of him, Miss Graeff? I shall be so indebted to you!"

As Mollie launched out upon her tale, she found herself surprised at her own



"You mean," said Molly, "you're not going to spoil a good story because the facts give out?"

eloquence, her own excitement, and emotion—so much so that very soon she intuitively put a rein upon her tongue, realizing that she could not express to a stranger some of the feelings she found surging up in her soul as she recited her story; feelings she did not herself understand, which stung and bewildered her.

But her very reserves told Miss Jerome more than Mollie herself knew.

"And now," said she, in conclusion, "you have the truth—entirely unprejudiced!"

Miss Jerome repressed a smile.

"But one would think you *would* be prejudiced," she said, "since this doctor's coming here has nearly ruined your uncle."

Mollie was silent.

"One would think," pursued Miss Jerome, "that you would be extremely prejudiced."

"But why? Can't one ever be fair and just where one's personal interests are concerned? If loyalty to one's family involves disloyalty to the truth, by which should one stand?"

"Oh, my dear, 'the truth' might go hang! I'd stand by my family if I cared two cents about them. To be sure, if the dear and precious truth were embodied in an interesting young doctor——"

"You are a cynic as well as pessimist," declared Mollie, her color deepening, "aren't you? You don't believe people ever act from high and disinterested motives?"

"What I believe is that the young are capable of the most delightful self-deception, my dear! But there, there! Continue to think, if it makes you comfy, that you would just as warmly defend this doctor if he were a little old rat of a man instead of a big, handsome young animal with a fine face and a noble brow——"

"I am sure I should!"

"Oh, dear!" sighed Miss Jerome. "Was I ever so young as this?"

"You are not so awfully much older than I am."

"Centuries older, my child!"

"It is journalism that has done it, then; it is demoralizing. Its cheap commonplaces has aged your spirit by making you skeptical of anything that looks as if it might be deep or earnest. You think everything in God's universe is cheap, ephemeral, commonplace. Now, isn't that true?"

They had reached the schoolhouse door, and now paused at the foot of the steps.

"It is most extraordinary to find a girl like you out here!" Miss Jerome irrelevantly replied. "How does it happen? When you come back at noon, I

shall be gone, or I should beg you to tell me something of yourself. You and I would be first-rate friends if we had the chance."

"Oh!" sighed Mollie. "It's been like a breath of heaven to talk with some one for an hour who is of 'the world's people'!"

"Even a degenerate journalist. But isn't your doctor of 'the world's people'? He hath an intelligent eye, if one may judge by a passing glance."

"I've never talked to him except in a brief business way."

"A 'brief business way'? Hm-m!" she said, considering. "I should think even local politics could not keep you two apart in a community like this, where neither he nor you could find any one else to talk to. Well—good-by, Miss Graeff. I'll send you an occasional picture post card of William Penn on the City Hall, to keep you in mind of me!"

"And a copy of the *Budget* containing your story of Doctor Thorpe?"

"Certainly. Good-by!"

She was gone—and Mollie, still with heightened color and sparkling eyes, went into her schoolhouse.

CHAPTER XII.

Mollie's efforts to keep up with the double work of school and home soon told on her health and looks rather severely. Her uncle, gaining courage from her easy submission and from his confidence in the security of his own position since the quarantine at the hotel, occasionally encroached too far in his requirements—usually when an extra relay of drummers and mule dealers turned up to be "eat and sleep," or when, excessively irritated by the growing influence in the district of his arch enemy, Doctor Thorpe; by the fact, which every day was more patent, that since the doctor had been elected to the board of supervising, even though not yet sworn into his office, his influence was such that the roads all over the township were being put into excellent state at far less expenditure than had been made previously for execrable

roads; and that, in view of these economic conditions, opposition to his radical methods was dying out, replaced by enthusiastic cooperation. Whenever these facts bore down with fresh force upon Mike, Mollie was made to feel it in his almost impossible demands upon her.

Experience had taught her much subtlety, so, instead of rebelling against his exactions, she would, when she felt on the verge of a breakdown, judiciously find herself on a Saturday or Sunday morning—never on a school day—unable to rise from her bed. This plan she found to work excellently, for her prudent relatives saw that they lost more than they gained by overworking her one day so that she was incapacitated the next.

As the end of the month drew near, Mollie wondered more and more what she would do and where take refuge from her uncle's resentment when he should discover that she meant to charge him for all this work she was doing. As yet, she saw no way out for herself. Her anxiety added not a little to the strain she was under.

But another and heavier trouble weighed upon her. The news reached her one day of Doctor Thorpe's having had a visitor with him over the previous Sunday, a young Princeton graduate, whom he had introduced to all the school directors as a candidate for the school six weeks hence.

The very hopelessness of her situation made her resolve upon a last desperate effort to retain her place. She determined to "have it out" with Doctor Thorpe.

"I have nothing to lose, anyway. I've practically lost everything already!" she mourned. "So I can't damage myself. And there may be a bare chance of my softening him."

But the means she took to "soften" him was a cold and formal inquiry by mail as to his grounds for persisting in his determination to take her position from her.

His reply was prompt and lucid.

MY DEAR MISS GRAEFF: My grounds for opposing another candidate to you were

clearly stated at the board meeting at which you were present:

- (a) Growing boys need a man over them.
- (b) The position ought to be given to one to whom self-support is a necessity.
- (c) I am opposed to the school's being taught by a native of the neighborhood.
- (d) I am opposed to child labor—you are too young for the strenuous work of that school. It requires a man's strength.
- (e) But my strongest reason I did not fully state. Since you have asked me I will answer you frankly, though at the risk of offending you. We want a teacher of *culture* in our school—not a normal-school graduate, but a college-bred teacher. I am sure you will agree with me that this would be good for us.

Feeling assured that you will be better and happier when we have relieved you of your present too-arduous post, and with every good wish for your welfare, I am,

Cordially and sincerely yours,
M. M. THORPE.

Mollie sat up late that night to answer it.

MY DEAR DOCTOR THORPE: Thank you very much for your full and frank reply to my inquiry. Will you let me be as frank?

(a) The majority of my pupils are not "grown boys," but small children who need, not a man, but a young woman, over them.

(b) Self-support is an absolute necessity to me.

(c) None but "a native of the township" could cope with the linguistic difficulties of the situation.

(d) Answered, as far as I can answer it, under a.

(e) Can you get a college-bred teacher of *culture* to work out here for fifty dollars a month? Of what use would his culture be to him here? Of what use has *your* culture been to you here—for I must suppose, since you value the commodity so highly, that you have some of it yourself—or at least know what it is as we "natives" do not—though you *have* contrived to keep it in the background, for I never noticed that you had found any use for it among us, doctor, though it may be that I don't even know it when I see it!

Finally, don't you think your requirements are a bit incongruous? Can you find a man of culture who has an arm "brawny" enough to thrash "a dozen lusty youths"? To be sure, you could elect your man of culture and hire a blacksmith as his assistant. The "effect upon our community" of this combination would be, I am sure, if not what you desire, at least stimulating. Sincerely,

MOLLIE GRAEFF.

The reply to this communication was not prompt. For several days, Mollie, in a state of feverish anxiety, waited for it in vain.

It was with a very lagging step that she was going to school one Wednesday morning, having called at the post office for mail on her way, only to be again disappointed—when halfway there she was overtaken by Doctor Thorpe. Stopping his car, he jumped out, and came to her.

"What's this I see?" he asked, with a frowning scrutiny upon her, as he stood before her in the road. "You are ill? Overdoing!" he pronounced. "It would be too much for the strength of a horse to wrestle with the Dutch-English and English-Dutch of that school of yours." He glanced at his watch. "A half hour before school time. Let me take you for a short run in the car!" he abruptly suggested. "It will be a tonic to you for the day. The best prescription I can give you."

Sick at heart as she was, the absurdity of his suggestion brought from her an involuntary laugh. That he should suppose she would go with him! In a flash she saw the excitement of the neighborhood should she be seen riding with Doctor Thorpe, who every one knew was conscientiously doing all in his power to work her an injury.

"Thank you—good morning," she answered him distantly, and moved on, not deigning even to decline an invitation which seemed to her, under the circumstances, almost impertinent.

"I see," he nodded, coolly walking at her side. "I am anathema maranatha to you! But you'll let me walk with you? I'll leave the car here in the road. No one will steal it, for no one in the

township can run a motor. Allow me," he said, taking the books from her arm as they went on together. "Will you tell me what is making you look so pulled down?"

"It's worrying about my position that is pulling me down," she answered. Then instantly regretted a statement which would only confirm him in his conviction that a man's strength was needed in that position.

"By Jove! Am I doing this to you?

But why on earth is your heart so set on keeping that da—blessed school? You ought to thank me for taking such an elephant off your hands!"

"I told you I had to support myself."

He smiled; his interpretation of that clause of her letter had been that she needed more money for finery than her "tight" Uncle Mike would allow her. But that a mere desire for finery should pull her down to such pallor and languor as this!

"Look here, child! You've got

to ease up. At once. Take my word for it."

"I assure you, doctor, I've no wish to martyr myself. I'm doing what I can to avoid it."

"Not what you can. What you must."

"What I must, then."

"Aha!" he said, as he caught the title of one of her books which he was carrying. "'The Matrimonial Bureau. A Novel.' Umph! Well, Miss Graeff, I'm glad you're only reading 'The Matrimonial Bureau,' and not joining it."



Stopping his car, he jumped out and came to her.

"Don't be surprised if you hear I have joined one. I'm desperate enough sometimes to resort to any expedient to relieve the monotony."

"Monotony! I should say! Now, an occasional run with me in my car might relieve the monotony, and save you from the matrimonial bureau."

"I prefer the monotony. And you seem to forget that I am living in my uncle's house."

"And naturally you resent what I've done to him."

"The point is that *he* resents it."

"And you?"

"Not nearly so much as I resent what you are doing to me."

He put this down against her as a rather selfish statement, in keeping with Susan's gossip as to the exactions she made of her long-suffering relatives.

"You are so obviously in need of a run in my car that for your own sake I'm sincerely sorry you don't like me."

"If you'd give me the least reason for liking you!"

"Will you thus tempt a man to swerve from the strict path of duty?"

"As I have pointed out to you before, doctor, you have a most mistaken sense of what your duty really is!" she said almost piteously, her pride revolting at the tone of pleading which in spite of herself got into her voice. "But," she hastily added, "I see that you are not to be reasoned with about this matter, you are too deeply prejudiced. Do you," she asked, in a dull voice, turning to him as they reached the schoolhouse steps, "mean to reply to my last communication? Or is the matter closed?"

"I am thinking over what you have written me," he gravely answered, no mockery or lightness in his voice now. "You shall have my ultimatum very soon. And it shall be," he added, "absolutely my ultimatum."

"Please don't keep me waiting long. If the ax must fall, I want it to fall quickly."

"It's a case of an ax falling, is it—your losing the school?"

"If it weren't," she answered, controlling her quivering lip, "I should resign at once, and save you the trouble of voting me out."

"Ah!" He stooped suddenly to pick up a newspaper that had fallen from his coat pocket. "Ever see the *Philadelphia Budget*?" he inquired, evidently pleased to change the subject.

"No."

"This marked copy came to me this morning with a letter informing me that it contains an article about my doings out here. I didn't imagine that our affairs here were of such national interest and——"

"Oh!" Mollie impulsively exclaimed. "I'd like to see it!"

He at once gave it to her.

"You can spare it?" She hesitated to take it.

"I'm going to town this afternoon. I can get another."

"Thank you." She took a step toward the door. "It is time for the school bell."

He held out his hand.

"Good morning, Miss Graeff."

But she distinctly avoided seeing his hand.

"Good morning, Doctor Thorpe," she answered, then turned and entered the schoolhouse.

CHAPTER XIII.

Not until the noon hour that day did she have a moment's leisure to look at the *Philadelphia Budget*, and then what she read therein gave her a shock that laid her low.

Miss Jerome, Mollie discovered to her horror and mortification, had deliberately made a romance of the doctor's story, in which *she*, Mollie Graeff, was the heroine—self-appointed! It was awful. Mollie turned cold and feverish by turns as, walking along the highroad toward home, she read the bald, bold story.

"No wonder she didn't keep her promise to mail *me* a copy of the thing!" she groaned, as the lurid lines at the head of each paragraph of the article scorched her eyes.

THE PRETTY LITTLE SCHOOLMISTRESS COMES BLUSHINGLY TO THE DOCTOR'S DEFENSE

THE DOCTOR A HERO TO THE RURAL MAIDEN

A Budding Romance in Simple Life

The Conquering Hero Himself Conquered by a Pair of Soft Eyes.

"Oh, Lord!"

Mollie tore the paper across, and tossed it over the bridge she was crossing, into the creek, wishing savagely it were Miss Jerome she was rending and pitching into the water.

"Why did Doctor Thorpe give me that paper this morning? Just to humiliate me? He overtook me on purpose! To *ridicule* me for the pose he thinks I took to that newspaper creature! And there is no way," she thought despairingly, "that I can make him know I am not responsible for what she wrote!"

All through the rest of that long day, the question never ceased to haunt her weary brain: *Why* had he been so unkind, so *mean* as to give her this thing to read? Perhaps he thought it funny! To her it was hideous, tragic!

That night, as with a heavy heart she went to bed, her last conscious feeling was her stinging mortification at the story in the *Budget*, and her deepening sense of affront at Doctor Thorpe's having dared to hand her the paper.

She awoke next morning with a feeling of depression which instantly recalled the trying events of the day before. She lay on her back, staring up at the ceiling as she thought about it all, her white face gleaming from out a circle of dark hair upon the pillow.

"Why should I care like this?" she wondered, the tears slowly gathering in her eyes. "Why should it matter to me what Doctor Thorpe thinks of me? But"—she shuddered, burying her face in the pillow—"the thing was so sickening! It made me seem such an ass! Oh! I do *wish* he could know I did not give that newspaper woman the least cause to write what she did!"

On her way to school that morning, she turned over in her mind the feasibility of writing him a brief note ex-

plaining the perfidy of Miss Jerome, affirming that she, Mollie Graeff, was not quite so weak-minded as to consider him a "hero"—far from it! And so forth, and so forth. But she dismissed this as "undignified."

"It would seem like explaining that I am not in love with him!"

Stopping at the general store to get the morning mail, her heart gave a throb that was actually painful as she received across the counter a letter addressed to herself with Doctor Thorpe's name printed in the left upper corner.

With her books tucked under her arm, she opened and read it as she walked on to school.

MY DEAR MISS GRAEFF: I am writing this at midnight, and shall go forth at dawn to mail it, so that you may get it the first thing in the morning, as I believe you are in the habit of calling for your mail on your way to school.

I want to offer you a most abject apology for what must seem to you my exceedingly cadlike behavior in having handed you that newspaper yesterday with its garbled yarn about things out here. Need I tell you that I had not read the paper when I gave it to you—and had not even opened it—and that I had not the least suspicion of the absurd and lying character of that article? I trust you will believe how deeply I regret the paper's having fallen into your hands, and the annoyance it must cause you; and I hope next time I see you to be assured of your pardon.

Most apologetically yours,

M. M. THORPE.

For an instant Mollie's face was radiant with relief. Then the realization that he was still silent on what was to her of such vital moment made her heart sink again.

"He hates to let the ax fall, that's why he delays! There isn't the least hope for me now! I might as well make up my mind to it. If he meant to withdraw his opposition to me, he wouldn't keep me in suspense!"

She walked on to school, feeling that the game of life was too hopelessly against her, and that there was no use in struggling longer against destiny.

It was just as she entered the school-house that what seemed to her a brilliant idea came to her. Why not lay her case before Mr. Kupp, the superintendent? He was a friend of Doctor

Thorpe's and might persuade him to cease his campaign against her. Or if Mr. Kupp failed to persuade him—well, Mollie was sure that the superintendent cared a good deal more for her friendship than for Doctor Thorpe's, and his influence with the board was certainly equal to the doctor's. Why had she not thought of doing this before? She would write to Mr. Kupp this very night!

But when that evening she went home from school, in a more hopeful mood than she had known for many a day, her cheerfulness was dashed by a harrowing experience. Going into the kitchen to help her aunt with the supper, she found her uncle, the Philadelphia *Budget* in his hands, raging to his wife about what he was reading.

"Here's a pretty thing again!" he snarled at Mollie viciously, as she quickly took off her wraps and set to work. "It's bein' printed in the Philadelphia papers yet how you're makin' up to that feller that done your uncle what *he* done a'ready! I'm ashamed to show my face outside! Fur my own female relation to go and make goo-goo eyes at *him*! It *says* so in here!" he affirmed, rattling the paper violently. "To think of your actin' up with him till the *papers* has to tell about it!"

Aunt Louisa, at the stove, turned her wide, cowl-like gaze upon Mollie with a look of calm but deep disapproval.

"And you wantin' to be so much, too, Mollie! A body'd think you'd behave yourself more decent, anyhow!"

"One thing you got to *understand*!" her uncle almost shouted at her before she could say a word. "This thing stops! And it stops *now*—or you'll not stay another day under my roof! Do you hear me, Mollie?"

"You could be heard, uncle, out in Montana!"

"None of your back talk! I ain't a-takin' it, because I don't have to!"

"Listen to me," she said coolly. "That newspaper article is a lie. Except on a few official occasions, I never spoke to Doctor Thorpe until——"

"You was saw walking all the way to school with him this morning a'ready!" Mike pointed an accusing finger at her.

"I was about to add, until this morning—when he walked with me for a few minutes, to warn me," she suddenly added, her nimble wits seeing a possible loophole of escape here from the predicament ahead of her at the end of the month; "to warn me that my school was suffering because of my overwork at home."

"What does *he* know about that?"

"As a physician, he could see at a glance that I was overworking, and he knows we are taking the hotel boarders. He told me I'd got to 'ease up.'"

"Leave him mind to his own business!"

"He considers it his business as a school director to see after me. Why do you talk about his 'making up' to me when you know he intends to vote me out at the end of the term because he thinks I'm not strong enough for the work? Naturally, I can't work so well at school when I'm doing so much at home," concluded Mollie, feeling herself a diplomat as she saw her uncle's instant anxiety.

"He even butts into the women's business!" he retorted scornfully. "Why can't he 'tend to his doctorin'—that's *his* job—and leave other people to 'tend to *their* own jobs? He's a darned busybody, that's what he is!"

"A rather efficient one!" said Mollie. "He'll busybody me out of my school unless I can prove to him that I am a better teacher than he now thinks me."

"Bosh!" her uncle returned, looking dreadfully worried. "The little help you give here is only good exercise after settin' so much at school."

"It's exercise out of doors I need—the doctor says."

Mike turned away, and, muttering to himself, shuffled out of the room.

Directly after supper, Mollie went upstairs to her room to write her letter to Mr. Kupp.



The Value of Background

By Elizabeth Newport Hepburn

ONCE upon a time a New England Wise Man wrote a thing which we profanely call an essay, when what it should be called is "The Revelation of a Truth Which Makes Life Livable." I have just taken down the battered volume from my bookshelves. The essay in question, I find, has been marked in twenty-nine places by the impetuous pencil of early youth. The pages containing this compendium of wisdom have been literally read to pieces. And I find by the inscription on the first page that Early Youth began to read and mark at the ripe age of seventeen.

It is a strange thing to record, that, when Middle Age reads again these scored paragraphs, the old thrill, the sense of delight, of revelation, all return in full tide.

What Youth saw, and felt, and stood on mental tiptoe to grasp, Middle Age equally sees and recognizes as something wonderful that has stayed close through full and busy years, and that will stay close until the end.

The volume you have guessed. You are quite right, it is Emerson's Essays, First Series. But you are wrong when you suggest that I am paying tribute here to "Love," or "Friendship," or "Self-Reliance," or even "Heroism." The essay of essays, marked so many times by that ardent pencil, is inevitably "Compensation." And if you will read it again for yourselves, gay Youth, steadfast Middle Life, wise Age, you will find, each of you, something to reward you for reading these less-distin-

guished pages. I hope that your copy also is battered, and worn, and heavily interlined by the rash pencil of Early Youth!

Since the Sage of Concord lived and wrote, we have traveled far and achieved much. But however we may develop and achieve, we still need the counsel of that burning essay on "Compensation." So much have we done during the past fifty years that we grow cocksure and haughty.

A professor in one of our New England universities said to me: "How I wish I had life to begin over again now! The children of to-day have so much better training than we had, so much more chance to arrive."

True beyond cavil, I suppose. Our schoolboys and girls are fortunate, although I fancy that some of them may envy the less-complicated lives of their parents and grandparents in moments of rebellion against that increasingly possessive dogmatist, "Modern Science." The schools teach to-day what our grandparents never dreamed could be taught; from Biology to Scientific Cooking, and from Air Navigation to Sexual Hygiene, the curriculum is impressive, sometimes inspiring.

But if we have gained much, we are in danger of losing much, too. There is even a chance that we may surrender more than we achieve, and wake up one day to find the coming race bereft of some of those elemental essentials of human happiness without which knowledge is vain and progress a mere treadmill of the ages.

A sense of the value of background is, to my mind, one of those good things which we are in danger of losing. To compensate, we have education, and education. We have twentieth-century girls, who are competent, trained, clear-eyed. Soon we shall have still better-trained women, with a voice in the management of civic and governmental affairs. Yet already the question obtrudes itself: for some of our losses, do our compensations really compensate? And primarily, peculiarly, in this matter of background so fundamentally valuable in the process of education?

A good picture needs a suitable and becoming background, as everybody will concede, however diverging individual taste in wall papers may be. A picture may possess technically splendid qualities. It may be stirring, possessive, or ennobling. It may be framed in exactly what corresponds best to its tones and tints, or contrasts most finely with its pure distinction. But if the background is bad, if the wall and the room be cluttered with silly trifles, ten to one we never find the picture at all, or we fail to appreciate its distinction; or, worse yet, we perceive its rarity, but with such disgust for its environment that all pleasure is lost, all inspiration stifled.

For a human being a background is as essential as for a picture. If a charming young girl is to be appreciated, sought, developed, and admired by real connoisseurs of human worth; if she is to attract the right companions, the enduring friendships, the supreme success in life, then she needs, above all things, the right setting, the spiritual color scheme which is to bring out her charm as the background shows the picture or statue to advantage. This supreme success is, after all, nothing more than happiness of body, brain, and spirit.

"Character," you say, "social service, moral greatness, these things are higher than mere happiness."

Granted. And yet the happiness I mean only exists where the spirit is great enough to hold it. One cannot be really happy unless one is of service to the community, unless one have the

brain and the heart to feel, and comprehend, and work, to suffer and to love. Happiness in any vital sense is as inseparable from character as warmth from sunlight. If thoroughly wicked or ignoble people have radiant moments, then in those moments they are neither wicked nor ignoble.

But the importance of this question of background lies deeper than any matter of personal happiness, the happiness of the individual. It has to do with the welfare of the race, and, therefore, with its progress, its evolution to higher and higher planes of action and ideal. Give children noble environment in childhood and early youth, and you will materially raise the quality of human nature for generations to come.

Exactly in this matter are we losing now, or losing in our great cities, at least, wherever our schools and colleges seem to foster the idea that education is wholly a matter for the teacher and the professor, rather than for the parent, the homemaker. Let a child hear Shakespeare and Shelley read aloud at home from the time he is able to comprehend even a tenth of what he hears, and his taste is finer, when he becomes a man, than it would have been had he first met those great masters in the schoolroom or the lecture hall.

On the other hand, the youngster who sees at home stupid, futile pictures, who in leisure hours reads cheap and easy children's literature, who hears rag-time rather than Beethoven, and slangy colloquialism rather than well-chosen English, is the child who, in after years, will have the greatest difficulty in forming any high quality of artistic taste or perception, no matter how excellent his teachers may be, how eager his desire for all that is best in the world of art and thought.

More important than its influence on culture, however, is the relation of background to marriage; the right, sane, radiant, early marriage which counts for racial betterment. Which of you, living in a great city, has not heard attractive girls talk about the scarcity of attractive and eligible young men? According to

them, there is small opportunity for educated, busy, thoughtful girls to meet men of their own kind and quality.

I have believed the situation exaggerated. I have dogmatically asserted that girls have as good an opportunity to marry well to-day as ever they had in the past; that usually when an attractive young woman can honestly deny having had opportunities to marry, and marry well, the fault lies in herself. And certainly in many instances the critical, competent, charming, twentieth-century girl is looking not for a mate, but for a paragon, a person of obvious charm, unchallenged youth, exceptional attainments, and unlimited income, whom she is no more apt to find than she deserves, she herself being a person far short of perfection.

There is, however, another side of the shield, and I confess that I have seen it, despite the semiblindness of the incurable optimist. In our modern life, with its schools and colleges, its special business opportunities for the young, there seems to be a change in the attitude of parents toward their children; a decrease of the sense of responsibility; and on the part of the children an increasing independence and intolerance of control.

The result to the young girl is particularly disastrous, since, long before her character is formed, her warring qualities fused, her judgment ripened, she has ceased to rely upon the home atmosphere for development and happiness. She may be living at home, taking her meals at the family table; but too often she regards her school or club or office, or the home of her intimate friend, as more her rightful place than the home of her parents.

When this occurs, it is usually the fault of the girl's mother, sometimes of the father, when he has sufficient leisure from the business of breadwinning to be held responsible for his children's welfare beyond the sphere of dollars and cents.

For, however simple the home, it is the parents who are responsible for its tone and atmosphere, its fitness to show finely, if not brilliantly, the gem of man-

hood or womanhood in the making. It is the parents who should make the home homelike, the right guest welcome, the wrong guest conscious that he is not where he belongs; and this without personal animus or unjust prejudice.

I am not advocating a system of European chaperonage. The social conditions where girls and women are most free to come and go, to see for themselves and choose for themselves and follow their native bent, are the conditions which make women more intelligent and men more moral than in any Old World chaperon or harem system. But there is a happy mean between the extremes of treating a young girl like a veiled *houri*, or even a *jeune fille*, and that of leaving her entirely free to work out her own social salvation from the age when she graduates from high school, and tucks up her braids, and wears her first long skirt. Yet this last is the habit of many American parents to-day, and to my mind, more than any other thing, it accounts for the fact that so many attractive girls marry late or marry not at all, particularly in our large cities.

For the girl who is obliged to get her training away from home, the problem is necessarily a difficult one to solve. Living in a boarding house or with another girl in a tiny flat, the lack of background nobody can help, perhaps, at the time. Yet the girl who has once possessed the suitable, becoming background at home, has sometimes a curious knack of carrying it with her wherever she goes, to the hall bedroom, the tiny studio, the bachelor-girl apartment.

For there is this about the atmosphere of the ideal home: it is something so subtle, so pervasive, so exquisitely strong and fine that it may cling to one throughout a long life. A girl may lose her mother, her home life, at sixteen, yet if the mother was large-minded and honest, clean of heart and courageous to face facts—the facts of life, of sex, of character—the girl will all her life possess a charm, a security, a self-dependence such as make for distinction,

and for friends and lovers of like quality.

Another girl—living all her youth with parents unconscious that there is an art of mothering and fathering as fine as the art of Rembrandt or Raphael—may forever miss that something which I am endeavoring to catch in the unruly net of language. To say that your background travels about with you sounds fanciful perhaps. Yet we have all seen charming women transplanted to new environment, without one old flame to advertise their popularity, who, in brief season, hold sway over new friends, new lovers, as potent as the old spell in the old home.

For that matter, every woman who has been greatly loved carries the fact about with her, indelibly written upon her features, the very curve of her cheek and lift of her chin, so long as she lives.

What is this matter of background, after all? Is it the result of money, brains, culture, of class distinction, class opportunity, or of a dozen other things not always under the control of the most devoted and conscientious of parents? Or is it a purely personal possession, distinguishing the mother or the father, a thing which can neither be taught nor acquired nor transmitted? Or is it not, when all is said, something which every fairly educated, well-mated couple can, perhaps consciously, evolve by virtue of their own maturing personalities, and by reason of their realization that their children are growing up, in need of sympathy, of understanding, of friendship, no less than of love?

A good background implies all these things. It implies parental willingness to acknowledge the individuality and independence of children while still young and plastic. It means tolerance of much noise and nonsense—of the wild hilarity and deep-rooted imaginative sadness of early youth—in turn. It necessitates thought and intelligent planning by grown-ups in order that children shall enjoy their home life, their private haunts, and the general family sitting rooms as well. Above all, it demands that, notwithstanding due restraint and

protection for the young, growing life, the atmosphere of the home be that of the clean, free open, untainted by pharasaism or blind formality, so that parents and children may discuss together frankly and freely the fundamental facts, and ideals, and theories concerning life, social, biological, moral, both as concerns the world and the children themselves.

Given such a home atmosphere as this, and young people will bring back their choicest discoveries in the way of other young people. The girl with a braid down her back and short dresses will talk over her friends and schoolmates with mother, and be subtly influenced to choose as intimates those of soundest fiber and strongest personality. From such childish comradeships spring many of the finest matings in after years; and a marriage between two who have walked home from school together, and made fudge in the same kitchen, have been allowed to correspond in happy, friendly fashion during their teens by a wise and far-sighted mother, is a marriage which usually assures health, love, joy, and entails no ghastly surprises or gruesome disillusion.

As the years go by, this matter of background assumes subtle and difficult aspects. The girl of twenty-six living at home is very different from the girl of sixteen. Her background should, in a sense, alter with her maturing personality. In fact, before this she must have been allowed to help make her own background if it is to be a revelation of her young womanhood, and she is to possess a magnetic attraction for the right people, above all, for those young men from whom she is eventually to choose her husband.

So often we see the opposite situation, the girl who finds her pleasure away from home, whose friends prefer to meet her elsewhere, whose womanhood is pathetically cheapened in the eyes of young men because they do not see her in a fit environment. They see her at the homes of other girls, "bohemian" girls, or girls ambitious for the attainment of a cheap popularity, sophisticated, at odds often with their own

families, mad for amusement outside, the *matinée*—any *matinée*—the problem play—any play—the showy restaurant.

Such girls come to measure a young man not by his ambition, his power to work, his clean mind, kind heart, and wholesome body, but solely by the sort of entertainment he can afford to give them. To their mind, eligibility means motor cars, an independent income, or a wealthy and complaisant father, leisure and money wherewith to show a girl "the time of her life."

Yet, as a rule, a young man between twenty and thirty, who has unlimited time and means, is the man who at fifty will have become a sot, a spendthrift, or that type of man about town for whom nobody has real respect, and who has none for himself. There are exceptions certainly. Young men do exist who have money, brains, freedom to travel and go about a great deal socially, and at the same time the moral force ultimately to make good.

But such occasional favorites of Fortune are the very men who, consciously or unconsciously, interest themselves keenly in the matter of a girl's background; not necessarily that it must be rich or splendid, but that it be becoming, suitable, dignified.

It seems unessential to lay stress upon this question of background for boys and young men, as distinct from what is merely a wholesome and happy-home atmosphere generally. Where there are girls in a family, there boys naturally congregate. The maid is magnet, the youth iron which the magnet draws.

Yet no boy lives in such an environment as constitutes a happy background for girlhood without gaining therefrom. The type of woman from which he selects his wife at thirty is practically selected by the time he is seventeen. It is his mother and his sister who form his taste, his prejudices and predilec-

tions concerning the women he is to meet in after years.

He may never analyze the matter, but by twenty-five he has become a connoisseur in backgrounds. It is the girl and her background together that shape desire which ultimately ripens into the perfect fruit of love.

It may seem at first that his attitude is that of a snob, considering the accessory rather than the individual. But if he be a true man, and neither a pygmy nor a parasite, he cares not that the background be rich or splendid, but only that the subtle atmosphere about the woman he loves be sweet with the perfume springing from wholesome childhood and first youth. After all, his instinct in the matter is racially protective. A girl who has been exquisitely mothered will, in turn, be a mother to her child's brain and spirit as well as to its body, its material needs.

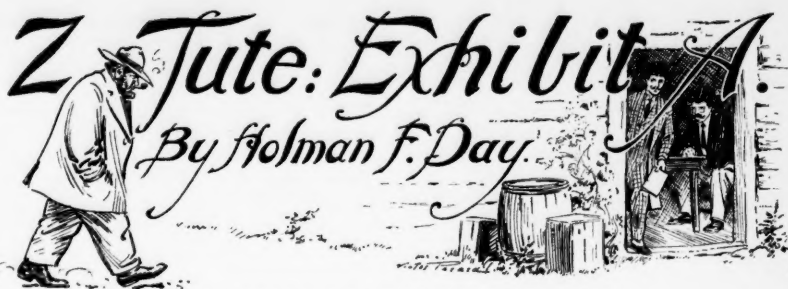
To a young man of such character, underlying forces may reveal the one desirable woman for him in an environment so simple, so unworldly, that a more stupid or earth-bound youth would behold merely a penniless breadwinner, lost in a desert of sweating humanity.

The fortunate man, on the contrary, perceives, even in the dreary boarding house or the bare, unfashionable flat, those delicate influences which have shaped a woman's character and conduct in her girlhood home, far away and long ago. He recognizes, perhaps without shaping his feeling in the form of language, that something which surrounds her with dignity and bears witness to her consciousness of the responsibility of her modern womanhood, that something which has protected her idealism, her purity of aim, and her personal charm, and which broods about her like hovering wings of some wise and tender Angel of Motherhood.



Z Tute. Exhibit A

By Holman F. Day.



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

[The following picturesque passage in the life of Cap'n Aaron Sproul, of Scotaze, was provoked by the pernicious activity of his friend, Hiram Look, assisted by one Barnum Speed, who had, in times past, been associated with Hiram in gulling the great American public. Hiram artfully inveigled the cap'n into becoming president of what purported to be a simple spring-water company—the spring, located on a timber tract in a remote section, said tract being held by Hiram and the cap'n as an investment. Then Mr. Speed, who had been a successful circus press agent, perpetrated a fake story, which was widely copied by newspapers. It related that one Zealor Tute, an old man, had accidentally discovered a spring whose water gave him new life, apparent new youth, turning hair and whiskers black. Cap'n Sproul's first intimation of the story, into which his name was dragged as president of the newly organized spring-water company, was the receipt of several pecks of letters inclosing money to pay for water, the writers stating that they wrote trusting to his honesty, reading in the account that he had been high sheriff of his county. The letters also threatened that if the water did not perform miracles as represented, the cap'n would be held responsible. He stuffed the astonishing letters into his pockets, and sped hoofbeats into the north country, but the shameless conspirators, guarding the mouth of the cave in which the spring was located, blandly waved his anger and protests aside. They stated that they proposed to reap the benefits of what amounted to thousands of dollars' worth of free advertising.]

FOR an hour Cap'n Aaron Sproul had been sitting in the dim depths of a woodland cave, listening to the plashing waters of that hateful spring, and nursing a rage that was hot enough to make those waters simmer.

The silence was so profound that he could hear Hiram Look and Barnum Speed swapping congratulations as they asserted the letters he had flung in their faces, counting the receipts from this new flood of revenue.

"If that damnation piece of wholesale lyin' has been copied into the Tophet Herald—and it most probably has, seein' that no other paper has missed it"—mused the cap'n irefully, "then the ghosts of old Cap'n Teach and the Red Rover of the Carribees are sorry they ain't back on earth again to take lessons from them two out there. This world never raised real piruts until after the circus business got started."

Hiram Look came to him after a time, bustling into the cave with a fine business air.

"We're sort of campin' out up here, Aaron. Speed can wrasse bacon and eggs with the best of 'em. He's gettin' supper now. So perk up your appetite!" He slapped the cap'n gleefully on the shoulder, and sat down beside him on the outcropping of ledge. "Say, Aaron, Nature has built this place here for just what we're usin' it for. Nature has done a lot for us!"

"I'm goin' to help her a little," stated the cap'n, with venom. "I'm comin' up here with a bagful of dynamite, and blow my half of this cave so far into the ground that it'll raise a blister on the map of Chiny. You needn't talk to me! What Dixy Bull done in the pirate days, when he grappled and come aboard, was a genteel parlor game compared with this scheme you've dragged me into."

"Now, look here," pleaded his friend, "you're takin' this whole thing the wrong way! Ain't there a dozen big concerns in this world who are sellin' water, and makin' big fortunes out of

it? Water is the best thing to sell, because Nature furnishes it free! We've only been enterprisin' in gettin' our advertisin' started. By usin' brainwork, we've got a hundred thousand dollars' worth of readin' matter free."

"And you're advertisin' to make a man young again, grow hair on bald heads, put the thrill of life along the human keel, and even raise dead ones from graveyards—that'll be your next claim, you wolf-marked cousin of a Barb'ry tomdeego! And my name hitched onto everything as president of the company, and every old spavined cripple and one-lunger in this broad country writin' to me and holdin' me responsible if cures ain't made and new teeth started growin'! That's the hole you've gone to work and put me into," roared the cap'n.

"Advertisin' no such thing!" returned Hiram stoutly. "No claims have been made by us as a company. The readin' matter which the great American public has swallowed merely states that old Zealor Tute has found so-and-so, and experienced so-and-so. Of course, public reads, and smacks its lips, and allows to itself that what happened to Tute, as per readin' matter, will happen to aforesaid public. And that's why me and Speed are shakin' hands over the best thing we ever went into. And you're in it, too, and will thank us when you come to your senses."

"Where is your Tute? There ain't

any Tute. You don't dare to show any Tute—and you couldn't show him, even if you dared to! You are liars, and you know it!"

"You needn't worry any about Tute," stated Hiram stiffly. "We'll have him ready for Exhibit A, as they say in court, when the time comes that he is wanted."

"You were braggin' to me once that you took a Plymouth Rock hen, four colors of dyes, and a feather duster, and made a Royal Peruvian Cock-atoo," the cap'n said grimly. "But you'll find that what will go in the circus business won't go when it's a matter of usin' the United States mails. All is, I'm goin' to headquarters, and turn State's evidence. You and Speed take fair warnin'. You've been braggin' about how you dragged me into this scheme. But, by mighty, you won't drag me into jail if there's such a thing as beginnin' in time and diggin' a toehold."

"The United States mails don't have anything to do with this enter-

prise of ours," Hiram explained, holding his temper with the air of one who is dealing with a refractory child. "All you've done up to date is lay on your back, and holler, and kick all four legs in the air—animal you represent bein' carefully left unnamed. You ain't asked for facts, plans, or details. If that's your idea of the duties of the president of a company, you need a little special education in business."

"There's no business to this thing,"



Cap'n Sproul followed him a little way, raging.

snorted Cap'n Sproul. "The thing you're in is what they used to hang folks for before the lawyers knew how to lie 'em out of it."

"I'm goin' to say to you, politely and as becomes the secretary and treasurer of the Thrill-of-Life Water Company when speakin' to the president of said company, that there is business in this thing, and it will so be revealed to you as soon as you'll stop warwhoopin' and listen to common sense. But there's Speed hollerin' for us to come to supper. Now, Aaron, if you want to continue to sit in this dark hole like a hyeny in a sewer pipe, why stay, and I'll bring your meals to you. But I'd advise you to come out, and have your bacon and eggs whilst they're hot, and then sit down and enjoy the comforts of a smoke and a full stomach, and think it all over, and listen to plans, and see if there isn't something you can do as president of your company beside stand on your forward legs and make motions in the air with your hind ones."

With this little speech, Hiram walked out. After a moment, Cap'n Sproul followed. He could sniff the aroma of bacon; he had not eaten for many hours, and his journey into that forest fastness had been a toilsome one. He eyed Mr. Speed balefully as he took his seat at the rough table in the little shack, but he ate with the appetite of a hungry man.

When he had eaten, he promenaded the little clearing before the camp, stumping the sward like a skipper on his quarter-deck, puffing his pipe.

After Speed had cleared up the supper things, he approached the cap'n with a sheaf of papers in his hand.

"Mr. President, I'd like to submit to you some company documents, circular letters for your signature, and some other——"

"I've done my full trick at the wheel for one day," broke in the cap'n, knocking out his pipe ashes. "And when I pick company for yarnin' in the dogwatch, I don't pick your kind. If there's a berth below for me, I'll turn in. If there isn't any, I'll turn in under

the break of the poop, there." He pointed to a tiny gully where the ledge dipped away.

Mr. Speed blinked at him, analyzing that speech.

"If you mean by that footnote to the last verse of the sailor's hornpipe that you are tired and want to go to bed, there's an extra bunk in that camp," he stated. "But there'll have to be a board meeting bright and early in the morning, Mr. President. We're choked up with business. We've got to peddle this red lemonade of ours before the ice melts."

"If you mean by that gold-bricker lingo," returned the cap'n, ready with a few comments of his own on trade dialect, "that you expect me to get ready to hold 'em whilst you pick their pockets, I will here and now notify you that I shall have a few remarks to make in the morning. I can usually talk better after a good night's sleep."

He stalked into the cabin, took the bunk which Mr. Speed pointed out, and promptly went to sleep.

"We're goin' to have trouble with that old corned-haddock friend of yours," stated Mr. Speed to Hiram, when the cap'n's snores indicated that he was safely out of the conference.

"Not when he gets full details," affirmed Hiram. "Them letters flooded in on him so fast they took his breath away. As far as he's got with his ideas to date, he thinks we're goin' to peddle the water around by the jugful, guaranteein' the flush of youth and new life, and get into trouble with the government for lyin' through the mails. He don't realize what up-to-date business men, like you and me, can plan when we set our gray matter at work. You take an old sailor, and he's sailed by chart or diagram, or whatever they call it, so much that a little imagination in business scares him. You leave him to me. I'll work the general plan into him by degrees. We need him in the game, for a captain and an ex-high sheriff sounds good on the advertising. And when the money comes to him, it will be just as honest money as is made nowa-

days in most of the high finance games," concluded the old showman. "I reckon I'll turn in myself. When Aaron gets awake again, I'll want to feel pretty fresh myself."

The promoters and officers of the Thrill-of-Life Water Company ate their breakfast next morning without that flow of good feeling that ought to pervade in well-regulated business enterprises.

"Now," demanded Cap'n Sproul, the president, when he had swallowed his last egg, "will this be a peaceful bust-up—money returned to senders—or have I got to use dynamite?"

"I've got a little letter to read to you, Mr. President," stated Speed. "It's going to be printed in typewriting, and sent out to all who have forwarded cash. As your name has got to be signed as president, it may be a good idea for you to listen to it."

The cap'n scowled, while Mr. Speed read:

"OFFICE OF THRILL-OF-LIFE SPRING WATER COMPANY.

"DEAR INQUIRING FRIEND: Your valued letter and contents received by us, and noted, and filed.

"You will please understand that our company, consisting only of men of prominence and high responsibility, has been formed for the chief purpose of protecting what seems to be a wonderful discovery, and in order to develop it for the general good of humanity. There has not yet been time for full investigation. We are moving as fast as prudence will allow.

"The marvelous case of Mr. Tute, fully reported by the American press, seems to be all that the editors of the country have stated it to be. So far as Mr. Tute himself goes, the fabled spring of life seems to have been discovered for the benefit of mankind. His infirmities are healed, and he is young again.

"The question now with us is: What will the waters do for others? Mr. Tute drank them on the spot, sitting in the mystic cave where they spring from Nature's bosom, and their revivifying influence swept at once through his veins. Will the waters stand transportation? That is the great question now.

"We shall send on to you as soon as possible such a quantity of the waters as we feel your remittance and sad case deserve. Test them. Report. If they fail in any respect to accomplish desired results, do not be impatient, do not scoff, do not assert that the Spring of Life is a failure. It may be necessary to come here to the waters them-

selves, and partake of them where Nature pours them forth.

"We will work together, you and the gentlemen of our company, to discover just how these mystic waters should be administered. Be patient until the water comes to you, dear friend. Your letter is one of thousands, and we were not prepared for the great interest the public is taking in the matter. Write us fully at a later date after you have tried the waters. Then we will take counsel together for the best mutual good.

"Yours for new life,

"CAPTAIN AARON SPROUL,

"President Thrill-of-Life Spring Co."

Mr. Speed patted the manuscript.

"There, gents, if old Noah Webster himself could pick better words out of his dictionary, and put 'em together in slicker style to cover the ground to date, and josh along the contributors to our development fund till we get our feet placed, then Noah has got my goat. But he couldn't do it. I'm proud of that job."

"Proud enough of it to forge my name to it, hey?" demanded Cap'n Sproul.

"You're president of your own company, aren't you?" inquired Mr. Speed icily.

"I ain't chief of any band of associated sneak thieves, circus fakers, lyin' and deceivin' sons of—"

"Hold on! Hold on!" interposed Hiram. "There is too much cheap talk goin' on here about lyin' and deceivin'. We make no claims for this water. People draw their own conclusions from a newspaper account, and that's a right people have. We send 'em some of that water, after they have read that letter. What then? Why, some of them will be helped by it. It will be a case of the mind actin' on the body, and makin' the medicine take effect.

"The best doctors in this country do the same thing. That's a part of medical treatment. The mind acts on the body something wonderful! I've been readin' up on it. Take all them shrines, and all this healin' they call by different names! That water will help a good many, and it won't hurt any one. The more people you get to drinkin' water, the more good you are doin' for the world. We're right in workin' side by



"No slapdash job to this," he informed the attentive cap'n.

side with the parsons and the prohibitionists. Nothin' to be ashamed of in that, is there?

"But this letter business is only skirmish work, Aaron. A good many will be helped by the small doses we send 'em, as I have said. But Speed and me ain't infants. We've got a follow-up scheme, as they say in advertisin', that's a hair-raiser."

"A scream!" corroborated the general manager enthusiastically.

"I've been lookin' for it! I've been expectin' it!" the cap'n hastened to put in. "A plain swindle ain't enough for you two. Only highway robbery with the trimmin's will scratch the places where you itch! And you're gettin' ready to sign my name to that, too, I reckon! Well, gents, I'll make my half hitch right here. I snub headway right at this point. I'll serve a sentence for double murder before I'll go to State prison for stealin'."

He began to stride to and fro. When he swung the second time at the farther confines of his little orbit, Hiram whispered to Speed:

"No use wastin' time on him just now. He ain't ready for details. You

go out, and hire a typewriter girl, and start them letters on their way rejoicin', and get back as soon as you can with the doc. I'll be fakin' old Tute into condition. He's due to-day if them sons of guns keep their word."

When, an hour later, Mr. Speed started away down the tote road, carrying a valise stuffed with the letters of clients, Cap'n Sproul came out of his sulks, and profanely ordered Speed to stay in camp. Mr. Speed kept on with the statement cast over his shoulder that, as a free man and general manager of the Thrill-of-Life Water Company, he should attend strictly to business as he saw fit, and attend to it at times and places which were proper.

Cap'n Sproul followed him a little way, raging, and then returned to Hiram.

"I wish I knew at which end of this game I was needed most to save folks from bein' shenaniganed," he mourned. "I see your trick. You're playin' cross tag, and I can't run two ways at once. I suppose I ought to follow that skunk, but I'd have hydrophoby and fall to bitin' trees after ten minutes in his company, alone with him!"

"You're makin' a lot of touse about nothin'," stated Hiram, with dignity. "We're only attendin' to straight, legitimate business in the way it ought to be attended to. Any time you'll let your fires go down, and quit playin' that tune on your steam calliope, I'll post you on details. Now, Aaron, I've got a little spirit of my own, and if you can't talk without handin' me an insult every ten seconds, you'd better quit talkin' for a spell.

"I tell you once more that we're only proceedin' with this thing in modern, up-to-date fashion, accordin' to the best advertisin' rules. And I say that for the last time, and hereafter I expect to be treated decent by the president of this company. When you see me robbin' any man, woman, or child, then it's time enough for you to let loose your yawp."

There did not seem to be much reason for conversation after that speech. Cap'n Sproul went apart, and whittled in silence, and Hiram Look smoked cigar after cigar, wrinkling his brows, and plainly deep in some mental toil. So many hours passed.

The dullness of that situation was relieved about noon. Three men arrived. One was elderly, with white hair and whiskers, and followed the other two with an air of being teamed along by proprietors. They were younger, and had a cheap air of swagger. Cap'n Sproul, with an eye for men, promptly catalogued them in his mind as of that class of rural bunkoers he termed "hoss jockeys."

He strolled over to join the conference, which began promptly as soon as the men had accepted cigars from Hiram.

"We've hunted around considerable, Mr. Look," said the spokesman, "and here's our pick. How is he for looks? What you had in mind?"

"Just about the checker, so I should judge," agreed the old showman, looking the elderly individual over critically. "He's all agreeable to the general plan, is he?"

"He's agreeable to anything so long as he's paid nine shillin's a day for it,

and found. He don't know any too much," went on the purveyor, with a frankness in discussing a fellow mortal that immediately interested the cap'n. "Hain't knowed enough for twenty years except to travel around with a bucksaw, and earn his keep fittin' stove wood. So he ain't goin' to bother you with sassy talk or fool questions, or tell you how to run your business. It's just as I'd say of a hoss, if you was a friend of mine and we had come down to real cases on a deal—he's all right, sound, and kind, stands without hitchin', and won't kick the stall down."

The elderly man grinned amiably at this recital of his good points.

"We don't want him to know too much," stated Hiram judicially, "but of course we want him to know enough to remember that his name is Zealor Tute."

"Oh, we've rehearsed him on that till he's nigh forgot his other one. He says one name is as good as another one, don't you, Zealor?"

"Everything is agreeable," replied the elderly man. "Butter a bucksaw with nine shillin's a day, and I'll swallow it—especially if I thought I'd never see one again. I've swallowed Zealor."

"You see! It's jest as I told you! We're handin' you a smooth one, Mr. Look."

"Let's see! Agreement was you're goin' to be his nephews, and stand behind all statements as to his growin' young? That's understood, and no tricks about it?"

"Sure it's so understood! Leave us alone to put up a story on that point. I ain't sold spavined hosses outside of camp meetin's all my life for nothing."

"Then, I guess there's no need of goin' further and farin' worse," stated Hiram. He pulled out his wallet, and counted out bills. "Two hundred and fifty apiece. Speed said that was the figger he promised you."

"Right!" the two said in chorus, pocketing the money. "And when you need us, here's our names and post-office address."

Hiram tucked away the dirty slip of

paper, shook hands with the two, and they departed.

"You ain't quite as plump as I'd like to see you, Tute," said the old showman, after giving him another critical inspection, "but loafin' and plenty of vittles will help that trouble considerable. There's no time like the present, and I'll go right to work on you. You set down, and look pleasant!"

Cap'n Sproul had remained strictly on the side lines during the negotiations, and now he made no comments. But no more interested observer ever surveyed strange proceedings.

From a well-stocked valise, Hiram brought certain bottles, brushes, vials, and tins. He began on the elderly man's hair and whiskers. He made painstaking work of it.

"No slapdash job to this," he informed the attentive cap'n at last, standing back to observe the progress of the transformation. "This is scientific. Nine-tenths of them barbers dye a man so that he looks like a fried egg in a bucket of tar. But you just keep your eye on the trick I'm doin'. I know my card in this line!"

"You was braggin' to me once that you took a hen, four kinds of dyes, and a feather duster, and made a Royal Peeruvian Cockatoo out of her," the cap'n reminded him. "You might tell me what fancy name you're goin' to give this critter when you've finished him up. I can be gettin' the name into my mind so as to tell inquiren' customers."

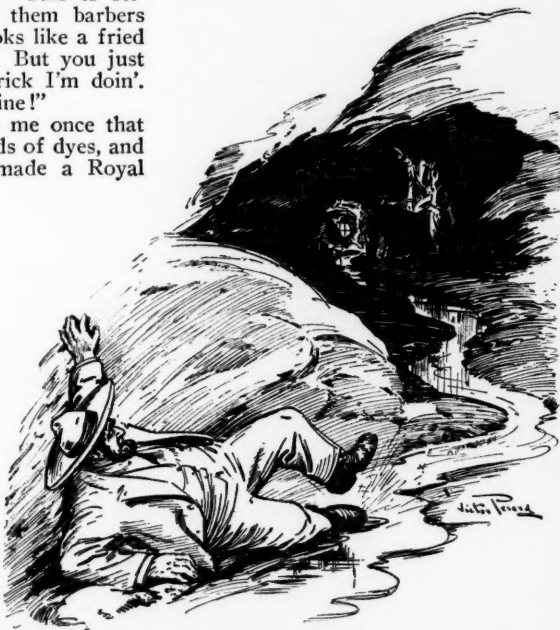
But Hiram's contented urbanity was not to be jarred by that sarcasm.

"You wouldn't listen calm and sensible to proposed details, Aaron, as the president of a company ought to, but you can't say that I

ain't takin' you into full confidence. When he's done he'll be Zealor Tute, as he looks *after* partakin' freely of the waters of the Thrill-of-Life Springs. Now, hold on! You needn't go to shoutin' fraud or robbery! Every firm is entitled to a trade-mark. This is ours. It's only advertisin'. We don't agree, promise, or contract to make any one else like him. Let folks draw their own conclusions. We say: 'Here's Zealor Tute. Look at him, and hear him tell what he used to be.' By the way, Tute," he broke out suddenly, apprehensiveness in his voice, "are you in anyways spry for an old man?"

His trade-mark promptly hopped out of his seat, turned two handsprings, leaped up, cracked his heels together, and sat down.

"I reckon doctors don't prescribe woodsawin' often enough," commented Hiram admiringly. "You certainly are



He roared in pain and fright, fell on his hands and knees, and rolled on his back.

a nimble old gent. You practice up a little more on handsprings, and I'll raise your wages. Only you've got to be careful to say that this spryness has come on you brand-new since you began to tackle our water. And another thing! You've got to begin to drink that water from now on, and drink a lot of it whilst folks are lookin' at you. A lot of it—understand?"

"I ain't naturally much of a water drinker," stated Mr. Tute a bit sullenly. "It makes me logy, and don't agree with me. When I drink anyways hearty, it's always old cider."

"If he can be more of a grasshopper on hard cider, better cider him up," commented the cap'n dryly. "If we're goin' to have one of these self-actin', automatic trade-marks, we'd better use the right kind of oil on it."

"There's no need of any humor bein' passed out about a matter that's serious and solid business," growled Hiram, beginning on Mr. Tute's eyebrows. "When I say anything about trade-mark, I'm sayin' sense. I'm talkin' business. A bald-headed man who buys a bottle of hair oil don't expect to raise hair down to his heels like the picture of the woman on the bottle. He expects the stuff to help his hair, and that's all. He don't come back bringin' the empty bottle, and hollerin' because he hain't growed hair that he can tie around his neck in a bowknot. And it'll be the same way with our water. Our trade-mark encourages people to drink water. I've told you before, and I'll tell you again, that encouragin' people to drink water is next thing to religion."

"I don't care how much water they drink, or where they drink it," said the cap'n, his resentment bursting bounds as he gazed on Tute's newly blacked whiskers. "But when you go to classin' this *bunkoin'* 'em into buyin' it on the same plane as Sunday-school work, then I say you're only lyin' loud enough to try to make yourself believe you ain't a bloodsuckin' thief."

"Other officers of the Thrill-of-Life Company disagree with the president of said company," affirmed Hiram, squinting his eyes, and standing back to ad-

mire his artistic work on Mr. Tute, "and there's enough of the other officers to vote you down in board meetin'. Furthermore, you haven't had full details. They'll be handed to you as fast as you can soak 'em in."

Cap'n Sproul got up, and marched away into the forest. He sat down at last, and tried to think out some prompt and effective manner of squelching this amazing business venture, but nothing sensible in the way of methods came to him. His experience in politics had taught him that no mere, plain denial of a story can catch up with the original lie. Mr. Speed had carried away the letters with their addresses. He tramped back to camp at dusk—ugly, but feeling peculiarly helpless.

He found Hiram standing over Mr. Tute, and urging that gorged individual to eat more fat bacon. But Mr. Tute was hiccuping protests.

"I heard a hoss-jockey case in court once," observed the grim ex-sheriff, "and it may give you an idea of how to plump him. Evidence showed that the jockey stuck wooden pegs into a board, and batted the hoss till he was fat with blisters. Try it on Tute. I'll hold him."

"I say again, I don't want no more sarcasm about straight business matters," said his associate.

The cap'n took the bacon and eggs away from the victim, and ate them for his own supper. Mr. Tute blinked gratitude.

But his gratitude did not carry to the point of accepting the cap'n's offer made secretly to him later in the evening. Cap'n Sproul informed Mr. Tute that he would pay him one hundred dollars in his fist if he would run away, and never come back. Mr. Tute spurned the bribe.

"When I'm hired, I stay hired," he said.

He even asked for a lunch before he went to bed.

"I'm nat'rally a supple man to get along with," he told the delighted Hiram. "The trouble with me is I ain't been used to havin' a great sight of vit-

ties at a time. But I'll work into it if you'll use me right."

Cap'n Sproul went to bed after that. It seemed certain that the Thrill-of-Life trade-mark had become a fixture in the company, and he foresaw fresh complications.

During the next two days, while Hiram added fresh embellishments to Mr. Tute, the cap'n kept his distance and his own counsel. There seemed to be nothing else to do. He pondered that, at least, he was on guard at headquarters, ready to pounce on the plot, and save his reputation when the thing became too flagrant.

At the end of the second day, Mr. Speed returned breezily, conveying a party of carriers who brought fresh supplies. The porters took their wages, and departed. One man remained, a cocky person, who wore a silk hat and waxed mustaches, and whom Mr. Speed introduced to his business associates as Doctor Bodge.

The cap'n was invited to attend "a board meeting" after supper, but he snorted contemptuous refusal, and went to his bunk.

It was plain next morning that plans had gone on briskly without his presence, because Hiram, Speed, and the gentleman addressed familiarly as "Doc" proceeded about their business promptly in the morning. They carried certain boxes and bundles into the cave, emerged for a hurried dinner, and went back to their work again, leaving the torpid Mr. Tute to keep the cap'n company.

Even contempt and indignation have their limitations when natural human curiosity attacks the mind. After a time, Cap'n Sproul went up to the cave. He said to himself that his motive was to investigate this fresh devilry in order to checkmate the plotters.

The plotters were busily engaged. They did not note his presence at the mouth of the cave. So he stepped into the dim interior, and made his way toward them. Suddenly he was mildly conscious that he had stepped into water, and the next instant he was acutely conscious of something more alarming.

He became numb, tingly, and prickly all through his body. Darting pains pierced his joints. Paralysis seemed to have seized upon him. He roared in pain and fright, fell on his hands and knees, rolled on his back, and, after a few moments of torment, managed to scramble away out of the cavern into the sunlight. He sat panting on the edge of the bank when Hiram, Speed, and Doctor Bodge emerged in a great hurry, and stood over him with solicitude.

"You must have got a soaker, cap," stated Mr. Speed, after prolonged scrutiny. "But you can't blame us. We didn't hear you comin', and we hadn't got the thing regulated down to the proper pitch."

"It's a shock of paralysis, gents," said Cap'n Sproul, too much concerned regarding his own state to note that remark. He was prodding himself here and there with his thumb. "There's folks in my family have died of it. It's come to me."

"It was a shock, all right," Doctor Bodge informed him. "But it wasn't paralysis. You needn't get fussed up, cap. You're all right now. You only got a good, healthy dose of electricity. You see, boys," he went on, addressing Hiram and Speed, "we'll only need to use one-half those cells. The cap, here, has tested out that much information for us."

"How did it feel, Aaron?" Hiram eagerly inquired of his old friend. "Tell us full, complete, and to the point. We've only got where we're experimenting on the thing. We want to give 'em a good fair dose for their money, but of course we don't want to scare 'em off the township with the first treatment. Do you reckon that about half what you got would have given you a nice, gentle buzz that no invalid could object to?"

The cap'n finished his investigation with his thumb, and looked from one to the other of the faces above him. Through his perturbation of spirit, the truth of the situation struggled. He got up, stamped one foot, and then the other, found that his limbs were sound,



He seized Cap'n Sproul by the lapels of his coat, and held him at attention.

and then fixed the doctor with a glare that was fairly demoniac.

"You devilish catfish!" he exploded, with pointed reference to the waxed mustaches. "You brought those jimbedoggified jimfixin's here! Now, what was it I stepped into?"

"Only a puddle of water spiced up in good shape from a storage battery," explained the medical man. "No harm done at all. Electricity is good for the system."

"Which one of you was it rigged the trap?" raged the cap'n.

"No trap was rigged," stated Hiram, with decision, stepping in front of Cap'n Sproul, who was threatening the retreating doctor with his fists. "You haven't been willin' to listen to details. If so, you'd have known what we were doin'. But you came slammin' in there, and what happened was your own fault. You might just as well cool down. I have told you that details would be given out to you just as fast as you could soak 'em up. Them that you soaked up in there just now were a little harsh, but you've got only yourself to blame. Now, you listen!"

Hiram Look could be masterful in his own way when occasion demanded. He seized Cap'n Sproul by the lapels of his coat, and held him at attention.

"I have been tryin' to pound it into your understandin' that the Thrill-of-Life Water Company is organized to do business, do it right, and do it on the modern plan. This is no scheme to peddle jugs of water through the mails, and have the bottom drop out of our business as soon as the public finds out it is only buyin' plain water. I have been tryin' to tell you for a week, but you wouldn't listen!"

"I don't have to listen," bellowed the infuriated cap'n. "I can see, can't I? Paintin' up an ossified old g'rilla, shootin' chain lightnin' into an innocent bystander, and——"

"I tell you, you'll listen!" asseverated Hiram. "You are president of this company, and you've got your duties marked out for you. You've been callin' your own business a fraud, and insultin' your partners. Now, come to your sense, and fall into line! Ask any of the high lights of science what's the best way to cure the ills of sufferin'!"

humanity! Ask Doc, here. He's the medical staff of the Thrill-of-Life Company, and knows what he's talkin' about. The high lights will all say that water and electricity are what do the business. Well, ain't we combinin' 'em?"

"You seem to be," returned Cap'n Sproul balefully. "And seein' that I'm president of the company, I'll advise you to go the whole hog. Take some of that water I stepped into, spice it up with arsenic, dust some assyfetidy on top, and advertise with my name signed, like you've signed it to everything else. You've set out to put me into State prison, and I might as well go in flyin'."

"Look-a-here, Aaron, I'm goin' to hold my temper until you understand this. I ain't fool enough to make the second one in a fight with you. It's considered honorable business, ain't it, to sell drugs to the public? And I say drugs are hurtful. We propose to sell Nature's own remedies undiluted. Water and electricity! But you can't sell things nowadays unless them things are trimmed up well. There's where the business part comes in."

He took fresh hold on the cap'n's coat.

"We're goin' to have sick and sufferin' humanity come right here. We're goin' to build camps to hold 'em. They'll live outdoors, eat good plain food, drink plenty of water, and get tickled up with a little lightnin' juice administered by the careful hand of the Doc, here. Good air and good grub will cure the most of 'em. Outdoor livin' will help. And the water and the electricity won't kill 'em.

"Of course, we could have the water without the electricity. But no one would take any stock in the spring as bein' a spring of life if we didn't have the trimmin's to go with it. Now, don't you see the scheme? Full details to date are hereby handed out to you. When you see this hilltop crowded with folks gettin' well on water, and plain grub, and outdoor livin', you'll be proud that you're president of the company. There ain't any fraud to it. We're

only advertisin' strong so as to get 'em to come. You said some nasty things because I've fixed up a Tute. Well, a Tute is a part of the advertisin' campaign. We've got to have him. The end justifies the means. You've got to poke people up to get 'em to do the right thing by themselves. Now, what do you say?"

He released the cap'n, and the old shipmaster backed away.

"Well, say something," blurted Hiram, after waiting for a reply.

"I ain't got anything to say," stated Cap'n Sproul sullenly. "You've said it all for me. Now, just sign my name to it as president of the company, and that will settle the thing."

"I'm goin' to take that statement just as it sounds, and not as I know you mean it," stated Hiram briskly. "You're a stubborn critter, Aaron, and I hate to take you by both ears, and ram you into a good thing—but it was that way when I made you high sheriff, and it'll be that way when I get the Thrill-of-Life Company developed where you'll be proud of it. We'll proceed right along with our business, boys. The first thing to do, Doc, is tone down that electricity dose. Our president says it's a mite strong for nervous constitutions."

"You're goin' to do it, are you—goin' to coax 'em up here and feed 'em lightnin' with a water chaser?" demanded the cap'n of his friend, when Doctor Bodge and Speed had left.

"You don't reckon I'm goin' to quit milkin' just as the cow is ready to give down, do you?" retorted Hiram.

He rubbed his nose, and gazed reflectively on the surly face of the cap'n. There was an expression on that face which hinted at danger ahead. Hiram remembered with uneasiness certain transactions of the past in which Cap'n Sproul had been a disastrous associate.

"I'll tell you, Aaron," he said, trying to affect cordial self-denial, "we really need you in the company. Your name has become associated with it. But if you honestly feel that pressin' business reasons make it inconvenient for you to serve as president, as the newspapers

will put it, then you might resign rather than have any more row and fuss in the company."

"Resign, hey, and let you gold-bricks go ahead, and operate after my name has been hitched onto everything you've done so far? Look here, Hiram, right now I propose to issue one document of my own, as president of this concern, and the gist of that announcement is that I shall stay on this job, and protect myself. You tell that to those other two pirates, and inform 'em that my name is signed to it."

"Your general disposition doesn't seem to improve any as the years pass on," said Hiram sarcastically. "You said you didn't want to be in the company, and now when you have a chance to get out you're just as sassy t'other way. So you're bound to stop in and make trouble for us, are you?"

"Others will tend to that end of it. When I went to sea, I had a pretty fair nose for weather, and the instinct hasn't left me. If the top of this hill ain't goin' to be a tornado center for trouble from now on until they get you into

State prison, where you belong, then I'll eat the almanac without vinegar on it." He drove his knotted fist into his palm. "I've got a reputation to protect, and I'll stay here, and do it."

"Well," sighed Hiram, after pondering for a time, "there's no big scheme but what has its outlets. In this case, it's the president of the company. But you're treadin' on dangerous ground when you start out to wreck this enterprise. I warn you that you ain't goin' to be allowed to do it."

"You've tried to kill me once to-day, but the plan didn't go through," sneered Cap'n Sproul.

Hiram's reply was a vigorous expletive that expressed his disgust. He turned, and disappeared into the cave.

Cap'n Sproul started to follow, changed his mind, and descended to the camp, where he lighted his pipe, and glared at the inoffensive Mr. Tute until the trade-mark of the Thrill-of-Life Company grew pale under his blackened whiskers.

"Well," mused the president sourly, "we seem to be ready for business."

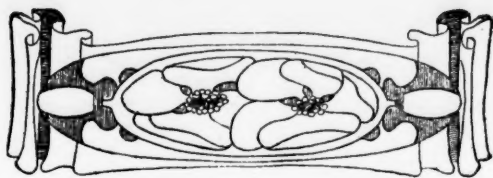
[In another story in the next number of SMITH'S MAGAZINE will be related what happened when the Thrill-of-Life Company began to do business.]



Acknowledgment

WOULDST thou return to me, oh, vanished friend,
 Drawn by the earth-tide of my quickened tears,
 With garnered wealth I would pay Love's arrears
 Most double full, who was so slow to spend.
 Pure, perfect coin of Heav'n, God did but lend
 For my bestowal, yet undrowsing fears
 Did dark it o'er with dross, and now it bears
 Upon my life with weight that hath no end.
 Oh, that I might, thus kneeling, lay it low
 Upon thy living hands, outreached to fold!
 What joyous light from my poor gift would flow
 Within the crucible of thy warm hold!
 What food of grateful words thou wouldst bestow
 Upon my heart, that starves of its own gold!

MARGARET BELLE HOUSTON.



Whoso Diggeth a Pit

By Edward Boltwood

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

JOHN HEFFREN was excavating a post hole at the Three-V Ranch; and when he saw me passing, on the opposite bank of the Belle Fourche, he immediately dropped his shovel, and ran down to the ford.

"I ain't no waterproof mermaid!" he yelled. "Come over, you!"

I rode through the brown ripples at the crossing, and found Mr. Heffren, comfortably seated in the shade of a cottonwood and preparing to smoke a very black pipe.

"Well, John, what do you want?" I inquired.

"What do *I* want?" retorted John, laying an injured emphasis on the pronoun. "What do *you* want, you on-mannerly seducer of honest labor? Didn't you beckon me away from my work just now?"

I protested truthfully that I had done nothing of the kind.

"In course you did," maintained Heffren, with a solemn wink. "And you knows how cow-punchers yearn to dig dirt! 'Light, mister, and tie your pony to the ground, and set a spell. The boss put on a new foreman this mornin'. Can they see us from the bunk house? Say, I wish you'd make motions like you was consultin' me on somethin' plenty important, will you? Like you'd been sent a whole lot for to get my views on the tariff, or the harem skirt, or somethin'." And Mr. Heffren kin-

dled his tobacco, and examined a blistered finger.

"Dig, dig, dig!" he grumbled. "Besides bein' inconvenient, it's plumb mortifyin', as Bill Pingree said when he lost his fourth wife. I never seen the time I didn't hate the sight of a shovel same as I would to wear a stiff collar—never only once." He puffed reminiscently. "Did you ever listen of a gent by the name of Softy Sawyer?" asked John.

"No," I admitted. "Go on, and tell me."

"A moon-faced granger, innercent lookin' as a lone deuce in a poker hand," said Heffren; "but I kind o' liked old Softy. He ran a little alfalfa outfit, single-handed, on Bald Woman's Creek, when I was workin' down there for the Lazy-M. The census of poppylation on Bald Woman's was 'bout zero divided by nothin', so we neighbored up consid'rab'le, me and Sawyer. Innercent? Soft? Why, alongside o' Sawyer, a Dutch baby would a' seemed foxier'n Mark Hanna!

"One day I was ridin' by Softy's shack, and I seen him packin' a mule with a valise.

"Where bound?" says I.

"'Railroadin' to Cheyenne,' says Sawyer. 'Heffren,' says he, 'two year ago, in Cheyenne, I wished a bracelet onto a girl in a la'ndry,' says he. 'Now I've got me a good crop, and money in my jeans for a weddin' ring, and I'm

goin' to take a chance,' says he; and off he hikes for to catch the train at Longhorn Junction, fifteen mile 'cross prairie.

"Well, sir, I didn't set eyes nor ears on this confidin' Romeo for 'most a month, and when he did show up on the creek again, he didn't have no va-

ticle in the smokin' car that had sprung the lost-mine game on him.

"This person give the name of Jones,' moaned Softy; 'and I knows a sight o' folks named Jones, and he had a cowlick of red hair on his forehead, just like my Uncle Alonzo. And he said he knowed my Uncle Alonzo. So



"Why, Mr. Fish!" says he, kind o' purrin'."

lise, let alone a la'ndry gal. All he had brought back was a shovel and busted pick.

"'Been prospectin', likely?' I remarks.

"Sawyer, he moaned somethin' awful, and he unlocked his shack and told me the whole how of it. 'Twarn't nothin' extry new. Before he'd got to Cheyenne, he'd been bunkoed by a slick ar-

we got talkin', and he had this old map, Heffren, on a yaller rag of paper——'

"Sure!' I butted in. 'And he'd stole the paper off a drunken Injun, hadn't he? It was a map to find a lost mine, warn't it, Softy? He'd go shares with you, wouldn't he? And then he touched you for a roll in advance, and left you the map for security, and skipped.'

"I don't understand how you

guessed it so acc'rate,' says Sawyer to me, 'but that's the way it was. Heffren, when I got through waitin' off at Crow City for Jones to come back with my fifty dollars, I went to that minin' place, 'cordin' to the map. It was down in a lonesome draw in the Bad Lands, and the hottest locality I ever was to. I dug and dug, till it seemed like I'd ought to smell Japan, and, Heffren, I don't believe there was no mine there at all, no time!'

"Get out! I says.

"Honest, I don't," says Sawyer. 'And I'd pawned my valise, and everythin', expectin' for to win a good stake for Imogene! I ain't fitten to go a-nigh the la'ndry now,' says he, 'and I loves her, Heffren,' says he, sort o' blubberin' once into his shirt sleeve.

"Funny? Well, sir, I don't know as it was so all-fired funny, at that. But come 'long next Christmas, and here was Sawyer on Easy Street again. He was a good farmer, and he'd made good money, sellin' his stuff to the Lazy-M people, and he whinnered to start for Cheyenne, and rope at that la'ndry gal until he fastened, matrimonial.

"The Lazy-M Ranch had shut up for the winter, so I agreed with Softy for to hold down his outfit, agin' he come back. Bein' as I had turned granger, I dressed up, granger style, in overalls, and a dinky-brimmed hat, and rubber boots. Say, you'd 'a' laughed to see me promenadin' the farm with Sawyer, the mornin' he left!

"But Softy, he didn't laugh none whatever. He was a pile melancholic, Softy was.

"This is a high-toned joint to lead a bride to, ain't it?" says Softy. 'Just a slab shanty, by jinkum! I've marked out a cellar on the ground,' he says, 'for a reg'lar house, but I ain't had no time to dig it. I wished I had me that cellar dug to show Imogene,' he says. 'It would cheer things up amazin'ly,' says he, and he gives me a insinooatin' peek.

"It's no use for you to look this way, Softy,' I says. 'A cowboy like me wouldn't dig that cellar for no 'mount of money, nor for no woman,' I says.

"Sawyer fetches up a sigh from his

chest, and then he puts his hand into his pocket, and shoves me a wad of bills.

"Heffren,' said he, 'I'm p'intedly set on havin' that cellar ready to show Imogene, and I tell you what you do: You come with me to Longhorn Junction to-day, and hire a man, or a couple of Mexicans, or four or five Chinese, to pike back here with you, and dig,' said Sawyer. 'I can spare these fifty dollars,' he said, 'and the cellar's worth it.'

"Well, all right,' said I.

"So we goes to Longhorn Junction, and ties the mules in a livery stable, and I puts Softy Sawyer aboard of the train. He was tremblin' like a warm tin of axle grease when he leaned out o' the car window, and his departin' words was not to forget the cellar diggin'.

"Now, a friend o' mine named Gib Adams kep' in Longhorn, and I pirooted from the station up to Gib's saloon, and here was Gib behind the bar. When he spotted my clothes, he let out a roar, pretendin' for fun not to know me.

"Hello, granger!' said Gib. 'How's hay?'

"Plentiful, thank you kindly, sir,' said I. 'Just sold the crop, sir,' said I, and I acted out my part, comical, by slammin' Sawyer's wad of bills on the bar. 'Give me a nice bottle o' lemon soddy with the froth on,' I said, 'for when us grangers has the dough, you can bet we let her sizzle!'

"At that, a tall, light-completed party that was roostin' on the pool table, he jumped, and held out his hand.

"Why, Mr. Fish!' says he, kind o' purrin'.

"No, you got me wrong,' says I to him back. 'My name is Crego—Hennery Crego, o' Sour Spring.'

"That's right!' purrs this affable stranger. 'I was certain I recklected you, Hennery. Shake, Hennery! I was in Sour Spring last year, sellin' reapers—name o' Washin'ton Bates.'

"Seems to me,' says I, falsifyin' my darndest, 'seems to me like I sort o' half remember,' says I. 'Sold a reaper to old Cooley, didn't you, Mr. Bates? Cooley spoke high o' you.'



"There warn't a clock livin' that would 'a' run 'ast enough to time us."

"That's right!" giggled Washin'ton. "What do you say we set down in the back room for a while, Hennerly?" he goes on. "I wants to talk with you about old Cooley and the other folks, and I wants you to call me "Wash," too," said Bates.

"Shucks, Wash, I don't mind!" says I; and Gib Adams, he never batted an eyelid.

"Then me and Bates set down in the back room, and, let me say for this Bates, that he was a cap'ble workman, and got to business as prompt as a automatic trigger. His graft was coal lands, and it warn't twenty minutes, hardly, afore he had his nice little fake map on the table, and had offered me a pardnership, and had mentioned, kind o' on the side, how he needed some cash money for to get his surveyin' tools out o' hock. Well, I grabbed a holt the map, and I was just ready to roll Bates on the floor, when all of a sudden he took off his hat.

"And there, sir, stickin' up from Bates' forehead, was a cowlick of hair, so red and earnest lookin' that it would 'a' stopped the Chicago Limited.

"I made an excuse, and chased back to the bar. I knowed that Gib Adams had a automobile which he claimed would bring out a blush of shame on a streak o' lightnin'. I fixed it quick with Gib, and then I returns to Washin'ton Bates Jones, the lost-mine king o' the coal fields.

"Wash," said I, 'your pardnership proposition has sure won me. Now,' said I, 'you'd better come out to my farm, only a mile or so, and we'll arrange matters further. My shove-off-er,' said I, 'is waitin' with my new tour-in' bus.'

"Bates balked a mite at first, but he caved when he see the auto, and Gib Adams on the wheel, wrapped up in goggles and a big coat, so's you couldn't 'a' reckernized him from Doctor Cook. We shinned aboard, and Gib onhooked everythin' and turned her loose, and me and Washin'ton bumped around same as a pair of dice at a all-night turkey raffle.

"Here!" hollers Wash, between bumps. 'Here!' he says. 'Lemme out!'

"But me, I didn't say nothin'. I couldn't. Why, we covered the fifteen

mile over the prairie road to Softy's in—well, I dunno. There warn't a clock livin' that would 'a' run fast enough to time us. Gib Adams, he stopped at Sawyer's ranch for me and Bates to detain, and then, 'cordin' to contract, Adams pelted back for the junction, leavin' the two of us there at Softy's.

"Washin'ton Bates caught his breath, and stared 'round at the shack and the scen'ry. The nighest neighbor, mind you, was five mile out o' sight.

"'What's this God-forsook place?' he says.

"'This,' says I, 'is your happy home.'

"'For how long?' said he.

"'For as long,' said I, 'as it takes you to dig a cellar.'

"Bates didn't understand me.

"'Why, you illegal pirate!' he snorted. "You've done committed kidnapin', perjury, arson, and false imprisonment!" he says.

"'You'll find there's nothin' false about it,' I says. 'You'll find, Washin'ton, that it's the realest thing you ever behelt.' And I onlimbered a gun out o' my overalls.

"'Now,' said I, 'let's bring this here transaction right down to date. I'll grub you, and bunk you, and entertain you with a pleasin' flow of anecdote, while you're manufacturin' a cellar, free of charge, for my friend Softy Sawyer, that you done out o' fifty at Crow City, and bunkoed to dig 'most to Japan, fruitless. And if the scheme don't meet your wishes,' said I, 'the coroner is more'n likely to pick you up on both sides o' the creek.'

"'But I'll law you, consarn it!' he hollered.

"'No, you won't!' said I. 'I've got the bunko map you sold to Sawyer,

and I've got the bunko map you tried to sell me, and if there's ary lawin', you'll see John Haffren anchored to the mat, and not to be thrown.'

"'I thought your name was Crego,' said he.

"'I don't blame you,' says I. 'You'll notice I don't carry a tuft of red hair to give my fool self away with.'

"Bates, he grinned; and, come to find out, he was the kind of a sport who couldn't help seein' a joke, no matter if he sweat for it. The next thing I knew, he had his coat off, and was askin' for the shovel.

"Well, sir, to make a long story longer, we hove to, and in less'n a month or so we p'intedly dug out a cellar that would 'a' been fit for the Queen o' Sheba. Washin'ton did what you might call the onintellect'al part, and I smoked, and directed his maneuvers. Also, we



"'Now,' said I, 'let's bring this here transaction right down to date.'"

made a little irrigation ditch for Imogene's garden patch. I ain't had no such solid enjoyment since me and Bill Pingree drove a herd of twelve hundred cows through the Mud Bottom camp meetin'.

"And the funny end to it was that Bates got so he enjoy'd it, too, after a while. You see, he'd been whiskyin' so much, and misbehavin', and bunkoin', that them weeks with me and the shovel was a reg'lar Keeley cure for him, moral and physical. Just as certain as you and I, sir, is settin' under this here cottonwood tree, that experience made a new man of Bates, complete, from boots to collar button. After that, he stayed out in the open, and went to cow-punchin', and got decent, honest jobs—better jobs than I'll ever get, dad-fetch my ornery, loafin' soul! Pass me a light, will you?"

John Heffren frowned regretfully at the dusky waters of the Belle Fourche, and reloaded his pipe, while I hunted in my pocket for a match.

"How about Softy Sawyer and Imogene?" I suggested.

"Oh, Softy brought her home," re-

plied Mr. Heffren. "Oh, yes! Sawyer and his wife showed up a couple o' days after Bates quit, and I'd give Bates the fake maps back, and we'd shook hands, friendly. Imogene was tickled 'most to death at the cellar and the garden ditch. So was Softy, too, when I handed him his fifty, and told him how I'd put him even for the lost mine. And there's another queer thing I——"

"Yip-ee!" shouted a peremptory voice from the river bank above us. "Yip-ee! You Heffren!"

"That's the new foreman," whispered John. And as we guiltily scrambled to our feet, he seemed to be embarrassed unduly.

I mounted my pony, and glanced up at the bluff. The new foreman of the Three-V was a tall, pleasant-looking fellow; he wore no hat, and from his forehead waved a mutinous tuft of extraordinary red hair.

"John," said the foreman, "I must have that post hole dug before dinner. Get your shovel, and fly at it!"

"All right," said Heffren. "All right, Mr. Bates!"



Come Into the Garden

COME, walk in the garden, sweetheart—

The garden of long ago,
With its "love in a mist," verbenas sun-kissed,
And heliotrope white as snow.

The sun is a golden yellow,
The trees are burst into bloom;
Our love, dear, only is mellow
And ripe for the harvest moon.

I'll give you a flower, sweetheart—
The fairest flower that blows—
My love, grown richer by waiting,
I'll mold in the heart of a rose.

FLORENCE NAYLOR DOTY.

The Finding of Moses

By
Anne
Witherspoon



ILLUSTRATED BY H. HAYGARTH LEONARD

THE cheerful face of George Augustus Binnell exhibited as near an approach to worry as its uniformly smooth and pleasant lines would allow. A little cup of after-luncheon coffee stood untasted on a small table drawn up to his elbow in the large, dim, oppressive drawing-room of his aunt, Miss Jemima Binnell. And that lady herself, looking more gaunt and forbidding than usual in an attitude of rigid uncompromise, sat on the other side of the little table, cup in hand, and turned a pair of perfectly stony and unresponsive eyes upon the appealing orbs of her nephew.

"But, my dear aunt," he protested, in the tone of affectionate, wheedling remonstrance that had proved efficacious from his schoolboy days.

"Now, George Augustus," setting down her cup with an emphasis that might be called a bang, "you are wasting time," interrupted Miss Binnell. "So far as I am concerned, this most unprofitable discussion is ended. I quite meant what I said, when I told you that check in April was positively

the last. Not one other penny from me shall you have. I am ashamed of you, indeed, to apply to me again so soon."

"To whom should I apply, then, if not to my own aunt?" replied her nephew, unabashed, with the charming, propitiatory smile that had often before done him good service.

"Why apply to any one, George Augustus?" replied Aunt Jemima inexorably. "You are a man, thirty-four years old, and look at you——" Miss Binnell paused to adjust a pair of ferocious-looking, shell-rimmed pince-nez on the bridge of her high, thin nose—"adrift in the world—a rolling stone—without ties or responsibilities or——"

"Well, and am I to blame for that?" demanded her nephew, with an amiable shrug. "If destiny and my own charms have not seen fit to bestow an heiress upon me——"

"Don't interrupt me, please," sharply. "I say, if a man thirty-four years old has not found for himself any place in life, in the scheme of things, he cannot be of much account. Why don't

you go to *work*?" This in the impressive tone of one producing an utterly novel and illuminating idea.

The young man fairly groaned.

"Oh, Aunt Jem, don't talk nonsense. Work! What work is there for a man like me to do? I wasn't brought up to work. Do you want to see me a sandwich man? That's about all I'm fit to do. Besides, what gift have I, what taste——"

"Just so. You're a born idler. But you know very well that I exerted myself to get you a post in a bank last year, and you wouldn't have it."

"No, I *wouldn't*," said Binnell, flushing all through his clear, sanguine skin, and for the first time showing a trace of sulkiness in his Irish blue eyes. "Bury myself in a beastly bank! I'd rather starve, and be done with it."

"Well, that is what you are likely to do, so far as I can see," responded his aunt coldly. She picked up her knitting, and her long, bony fingers moved with deliberation through the gray wool, like those of a modern Atropos. "A man who won't work must expect to starve."

There was a strained silence for a moment, during which Mr. Binnell gulped his coffee, which had grown cold and rather nauseous.

He made a wry face.

"By the way," he remarked mildly, "your cook does make the rottenest coffee. I wish you'd try our club blend. I always think it's the greatest mistake to economize on coffee. However," he transposed blandly, observing the ominous glitter of his aunt's eye, "to go back to what we were saying——"

But Miss Binnell's patience was at an end.

"There's no use in going back," she said. "I think I have made myself perfectly clear. It is a mere waste of breath to repeat that you are a failure in life—the worst kind of failure—a shirk. You had every opportunity. You threw them all away through your incorrigible idleness. You were spoiled, petted, ruined, by a too-indulgent mother."

Miss Binnell paused, and tightened her lips with disapprobation, but the

floodgates were loosed, and she swept impetuously on:

"Ten years ago, you were left with a handsome legacy—twenty-five thousand dollars—enough to set up any young man in life. But what did you do with it? A couple of seasons in Europe, the most expensive clubs in New York, florist and wine bills, card parties, cabs, fine cigars, and piffpaff! it's all gone like a puff of smoke, and you come to me, expecting to be coddled. You wine and dine at your friends' houses, accepting all kinds of favors and hospitalities that you have no possible way of repaying. No! If you won't work—go and *starve*!"

With a flush of anger and conscious rectitude on her high cheek bones, Miss Binnell rose from her chair, and stood stiffly erect. And perforce, George Augustus, although slowly and reluctantly, rose, too.

As he stooped to pick up his hat and stick, his ruddy face showed a trifle pale. He was pretty well inured to his aunt's hard words and frank speech, but this was just a little stiffer dose than usual. Still, it did not lie in his genial Irish temperament to take offense easily. He had met and flouted her harsh words before. He smiled pleasantly.

"That was a jolly lunch you gave me, Aunt Jemima—all but the coffee. Remember what I said about the club blend. Good-by!"

Miss Binnell fairly snorted.

"Good-by, George Augustus," she said stonily. "When next I see you, I hope to hear that you are taking a man's part in the world."

Riggs, the butler, closed the door behind him, and Mr. Binnell walked down the street, with an expression of unwonted reflection upon his good-humored, handsome face. The home truths, handed out so unsparingly by Aunt Jemima, had pricked more than he liked, or would admit. It was amazing what *had* gone with that twenty-five thousand. Money simply melted away most unaccountably. There had been the cabs and clubs that Aunt Jem so deplored, and also frequent loans

to needy friends, but George Augustus was not one to remember things like that. The money had gone, and that was all there was to it.

How had he lived these last five years, anyhow?

Rooms had been loaned him from time to time by more fortunate friends, who disappeared for long, delightful periods in Europe. Wines, cigars, dinners, he had never lacked. An agreeable, safe bachelor is never at a loss for a place to dine. He was popular. He had scores of friends who would stand a "touch" without beastly preaching. Women, all of them, were born preachers, he reflected bitterly. It was all well enough for Aunt Jemima to talk. She had house, servants, carriage, bank account—and to refuse her own nephew a paltry loan of a few dollars or so—by gad, of *anything* at all!

Mr. Binnell suddenly thrust his hands in his pockets, and drew them out—empty!

Jove! There was not even the traditional penny.

Work or starve, Aunt Jemima had said. Well, he might starve, but he'd be hanged if he'd work. Besides, it was so ridiculous to talk like that, as if all a man had to do was to put out his hand for a ripe plum to fall into it. Work meant applying to thousands of offices, in search of some beggarly bookkeeping job, that kept one mewed up in a dark, moldy corner all the best hours of the day. What sort of a life was that?

"No, there's nothing in it for me," declared Mr. Binnell emphatically, turning into Central Park.

He regarded with an appreciative eye the entrancing freshness of emerald turf. Birds caroled and twittered in the trees; the sky glimmered a heavenly blue through the interlacing network of green foliage. All nature sang. There was no evidence of work visible in this riot and joy of life.

George Augustus sat down on a bench. Here and there a wastrel was stretched on the sweet-scented grass, face down, or else upturned to the sky, with ragged hat pulled over the eyes.

The young man's glance dwelled upon them speculatively. Well, poor beggars, they hadn't wanted to work, either, apparently. Is that what one must come to in the end? What a beastly world it was, anyway, to be arranged like that?

Work or starve! Work or starve! Suddenly the words ran an unpleasant refrain in his ear. He had been in many a tight place before, but never one quite so tight as this. Absolutely without a penny! And his friends—well, his friends had been very good-natured in the past. But there was such a thing as working a willing horse to death. There was evidently nothing for it but another visit to the pawnshop, or he should be without his dinner.

"What a nuisance!" he murmured, stroking his mustache with one hand, while he idly switched off the heads of some presumptuous dandelions with the old silver-mounted walking stick in the other. He endeavored to reflect. His eyes rested absently upon his stick.

He was very fond of that old stick.

Still, it might fetch enough to take him to the home of his friend, Daniels, in Connecticut. Bob had often invited him to come and stay as long as he would. It would be a trifle slow in the country. But he could put in a couple of weeks there very comfortably, while he considered what to do next.

To decide, with George Augustus, was to act. Forty minutes later he stood at the window of a ticket office at the Grand Central—to learn that the cost of the ticket was somewhat more than the amount he had in hand.

People behind him were waiting. The ticket agent looked impatient over his hesitation.

"Oh, well," said Mr. Binnell airily, "just give me the nearest station to Roswick that the money will buy."

There was just enough, it seemed, for Stoketon, twenty miles this side of Roswick. George Augustus pocketed his ticket and a cent, in exchange for the two dollars he had been able to raise on his stick, and took his way contentedly to the platform.

Hastily buying an evening paper with the cent, "For there's no sense in capital lying idle," reflected the young man, he jumped on just as his train was beginning to move.

At Stoketon, two or three hours later, with the aid of the station master, he got his bearings, and struck off down a wide, shady road that stretched alluringly into the heart of farming Connecticut. Beyond bordering hedge and copse stretched wide, peaceful acres,

the soil which grudgingly gives them back a living, or refuses it.

"No," moralized George Augustus, "work takes the spirit, the beauty, out of everything. It is leisure only that gives one the chance to enjoy. If I bend my back to the burden, it is good-by forever to all that life has to offer. 'Beg I cannot, and to work I am ashamed,'" he murmured lightly, striking now to his left, as a warning finger post bade him, at a meeting of three



The road led him over a glinting trout stream.

peopled here and there in the sunshiny distances with groups of laborers.

As he strode happily along, bent on reaching Roswick, before Bob closed his doors for the night, he considered those far-away members of the brotherhood of toil in a mood of kindly, pitying philosophy.

With their faces turned to the furrow, what was this world of beauty to them, poor devils? This countryside, in all its rare loveliness, must needs be only a battlefield, whereon with sweat and striving they devote their lives to

ways. Still alluringly winding, the road led him over a glinting trout stream, and between hedgerows, whence swept away

"Broad fields of barley and of rye
That clothe the wold and meet the sky."

Or, so he quoted to himself, stopping once and again to listen to the wind in the grain and to gather a little bunch of wild flowers for his buttonhole.

"Hello! What's that?"

Pulling up short, where a tangle of sturdy brier, meadowsweet, and tall,

tough weeds at his left did roadside office for a hedge, George Augustus stood still to hearken for a short, sharp cry. Looking this way and that, he found no human creature in sight.

"It was a bird's cry perhaps, or——"

He peered into the green intricacies of the luxuriant tangle, and then it broke on his ears again. There was a thrill of pain in the muffled notes.

"A rabbit caught in a beastly trap, that's what it is."

Mr. Binnell had seen this cruel thing once before; and now, in all eagerness to offer the wretched animal relief, he broke off a stick, and prodded the bushes vigorously. In the midst of his investigations, the cry was repeated. It sounded at the last beyond the tangle, in the grain; and, all intent on a merciful deed, he went forward to look for easy access to the field.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated helplessly, as he reached the break in the briers and stared down at an object prone in the long, rich grass at the verge of a deep, dry ditch. Even to his eye there was no mistaking the contents of that blanket, deposited in full view of the road.

From an orifice at one end of the woolen roll protruded a round, brown head, and from it issued a half-strangled, half-enraged little cry. Bending, the young man gingerly unrolled the wad of blanket, and disclosed to his astonished gaze a round, rosy, sturdy, but very angry little mite of masculinity, about a year old, who stared up at him with clenched fists and a mouth open to yell, but caught speechless with surprise.

"Well, you little beggar—you little beggar!" was all that George Augustus found to say.

The baby suddenly relaxed his screwed-up facial muscles into an adorably roguish smile, and, putting out one small fist, caught hold of Mr. Binnell's thumb, which it made a laudable effort to convey whole into its mouth.

"No, you don't," said that young man firmly. "You don't cut your grinders on my thumb. Keep out of that, now. Who the devil are you, anyway? A

sort of Moses in the bulrushes, eh? And what do your folks mean by leaving you to burrow under a hedge like a mole? Pretty sort of family you must have!"

"Ah—ba—goo—goo," announced the baby amiably, but unintelligibly, and rolled itself over in a desperate but ineffectual endeavor to sit up. George Augustus laughed aloud as he watched its squirmings, for all the world like a beetle that has got on its back and can't turn over.

"Here, I'll give you a boost, old man," said he, suiting the action to the word.

And then they beamed at each other in established equilibrium and understanding.

"Hello, is this your visiting card pinned to your waistcoat?" said Mr. Binnell, when the mutual inspection was satisfactorily concluded. "Let's see who your high-and-mightiness is."

He unpinned a cheap envelope, and drew out a torn scrap of letter paper. It was still damp, and so blistered where tears must have fallen that the illiterate message scrawled upon it in pencil was well-nigh illegible. As he read its short, ungrammatical phrases, Binnell gazed blankly at his wide-eyed companion, who was busily attempting to crowd one fat, pink fist into a small, rosy mouth, and gave vent to a low whistle.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish, old chap," he remarked finally to the baby, who, relinquishing his dark designs on his own dimpled little paw, sat regarding him out of a pair of beautiful dark eyes with so grave but friendly an interest that Binnell felt his own go suddenly moist.

"You are nobody's son, you are. And your mother has left you to start the battle of life alone, before you can say ba-a."

"Ba-a—ba-a," crowed the deserted one joyously, with so accurate an imitation of his tone that the young man fell into shouts of laughter.

"Hurray for you, kid!" he said. "I don't know but what you are able to look after yourself, after all.

"The question is," he resumed, after a thoughtful pause, "just what is to be done next. I can't leave you here, and I can't very well take you on, an uninvited guest, to old Bob's."

"Tell you what I'll do," he continued presently. "I'll give you a lift to the nearest farmhouse, and then send word of your whereabouts to the orphan asylum, or whatever it is that takes in friendless little beggars like you—eh? A beastly shame it is, too," he muttered under his breath.

The youngster proved most engagingly responsive to all his overtures of friendship, gurgling with pleasure when he was hoisted up on the strong shoulder and braced firmly into position. He dug his small fingers delightedly into the hair of his new-found friend, and gave it an occasional tug, as if for pure good will, a performance that highly amused and entertained Mr. Binnell.

The two proceeded gayly enough in this wise for nearly a mile, but no farmhouse or laborers' cottages came into view.

The exhilarating exercise in the pleasant afternoon sunshine soon acted as a soporific upon the baby, whose chirps gradually became less responsive, and who began presently to wobble sleepily upon his perch. The young man lowered him carefully into his arms, and the little, dark head covered with short, silky rings of hair promptly sank against his shoulder, and the long eyelashes slowly closed over the sleepy eyes.

He seemed such a manly, bonny, little chap, and he was starting life under such a frightful handicap. Mr. Binnell looked down upon the small face, soft and placid in sleep, and noted the fine contour of the head and the unusual breadth of brow. He wondered what would be its life in the institution whither it was bound, and vaguely hoped that the people would be kind and decent to the little fellow.

But the desired farmhouse proved to be a long way off. George Augustus began to be conscious that the weight in his arms increased perceptibly with each half mile, and he was glad when

Master Sleepyhead condescended at last to open his eyes.

"Well, had a nice nap?" he asked jovially, giving his companion a playful poke in the ribs.

Baby smiled in response, but almost immediately afterward his mouth quivered, and he gave a little whimper of distress.

"Oh, I say, what's up, old man? What's bothering you?" asked the young man, concerned.

But the baby only looked at him appealingly, and repeated the little, distressed cry, with a questioning look that Mr. Binnell tried in vain to understand.

He walked faster, and talked gayly, endeavoring to divert the mind of his companion from his troubles, whatever they might be, and the child seconded his efforts nobly, never failing to respond to a laugh or a friendly poke.

But every now and again the little, sharp cry of fatigue or distress would escape from him, as if involuntarily.

Mr. Binnell's brow puckered anxiously, and then suddenly cleared under an illuminating suggestion.

"Pins!" he murmured, in a tone of conviction. "Babies always have pins about 'em."

He sat down on the bank, and, laying the baby on the grass, proceeded to make a thorough investigation by prodding him carefully all over, but no sign of an offending pin revealed itself.

The baby submitted patiently, if wonderingly, to the process. It was only when his extraordinary friend inadvertently thumped the hollow place where his dinner should be that he emitted a sharp little yap of hunger that was unmistakable, even to the untrained instincts of a gay bachelor.

"Ah, so that's it, Moses, my dear? It's hungry that you are, and no wonder," declared the young man, in a tone of relief. "I haven't had my tea, either, and that was a woman's lunch all over—a cutlet and a glass of claret—nothing much to stick by the ribs. But cheer up, old soldier! I think I see something ahead," he cried cheerily.

"See those milkers? If I'm not mistaken, your supper's in sight."

The group of fat, red cows browsing peacefully in a pasture near at hand, he rightfully concluded must belong to some farm close by.

And a turn of the road brought the cheering prospect in view: a low, broad, red-brick house, set well back on a slight eminence, overlooking the rich pasturage and meadows, and a well-kept farmyard, filled with piglings, chickens, ducklings, backed by big, comfortable-looking barns.

As they approached it, it seemed a kindly, open-handed, warm-hearted old house, with a great, shining wheat-sheaf knocker that invited to hospitality and good cheer within.

"We're in luck, Moses, my boy!" cried George Augustus, as he lifted the knocker and gave a resounding peal.

After a moment's waiting, there was a sound of slow, heavy footsteps coming down the hall, and the door was cautiously opened by a powerful, heavily built, grizzled old man.

Over the tops of blue overalls, gal-lused halfway up to his armpits, swept a patriarchal beard, above which showed the close-shut, obstinate line of a long, clean-shaven upper lip, while, beneath, jutting, formidable eyebrows, a pair of small, shrewd, hard eyes questioned Mr. Binnell and his charge piercingly.

George Augustus was taken aback, and his cheerful smile lost a little of its spontaneity as he said:

"I am sorry to trouble you, but I am afraid I must ask a bit of hospitality for myself and my pal here, who says he's hungry."

The farmer continued to stare with slow animosity, deepening into suspicion, at the somewhat flushed and disheveled young man with his burden.

"This ain't a hotel, young man," he growled finally, "and it ain't a charity place, neither." Thereupon he made as if he would close the door.

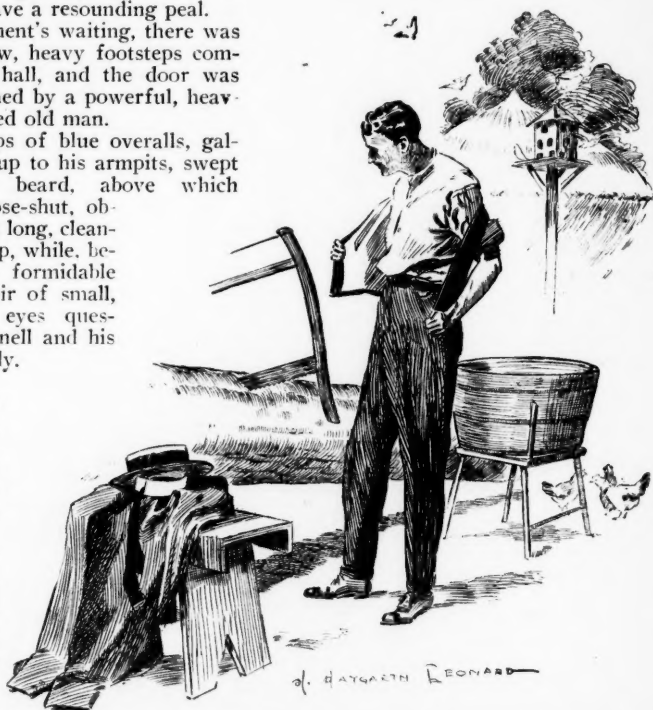
But Mr. Binnell interposed peremptorily:

"Wait a minute! Don't I tell you the child is hungry?"

"Is he?" surlily. "That's nothing to do with me."

"Well, whether it has or not, we've come a long way. Surely you won't refuse a baby a cup of milk. I ask nothing for myself."

In the dusk of the passageway, a shadowy figure crept forth, and a wom-



Another pause was made to remove his waistcoat.



"I should ha' thought, now, he was about a yearling," replied Farmer Taunton.

an's voice interposed with mild remonstrance: "Now, dad—"

The old man turned angrily.

"Now, ma, you keep out of this. I've bin pestered to death with tramps this summer, and I'll have no more of 'em hanging about my place. If this man was anything but a tramp, he'd offer to pay or to work for what he wants. Do I understand, sir," turning sardonically to George Augustus, "that you are asking to *buy* a glass of milk for your child?"

Mr. Binnell thrust his free hand into his pocket, and pulled it up, palm outward, empty.

"I have no money with me," he said stiffly, "but I am not a beggar. If you will credit me with the price of some milk——"

"That's enough," interrupted the farmer rudely. "I have neither food nor money for tramps. You can go elsewhere."

"Where is the nearest place?" asked the young man, in a voice cold with rage. Had this old man been his own age, he would have thrashed him with the keenest joy of his life.

"Waal," drawled the farmer reflectively,

"there's Benson's, three mile up the road, though he ain't partial to tramps, neither——"

Mr. Binnell turned abruptly on his heel.

But the baby, who, up to this point had been gazing with hopeful interest upon the proceedings, now, as if realizing that his protector was indeed turning his back upon food and shelter for another weary three miles, lifted up his voice in a sudden, wistful, pitiful, heartbroken appeal that tightened the cords around the heart of that young man with a savagely protective impulse. He wheeled round.

The old farmer was still watching him beneath sarcastic eyebrows.

"I say!" he demanded hoarsely. "Give me something to do, can't you? There must be some work on a place like this worth a cup of milk for a starving child."

The old man's forbidding expression relaxed slightly.

"Here, mother!" he called, and at the summons the gentle-faced old woman who had made her timid protest appeared.

"Take this child, and give it some

milk," he said, "while its father"—George Augustus started and grinned sheepishly—"earns his supper sawin' up the old elm that fell in the last storm."

The farmer's wife, with a smile, held out her arms to the child, who, after a momentary drawing back and clinging to the neck of his protector, made a movement to go to her. And the young man, with a curiously bereft and empty feeling about his arms, turned and followed the old man to the barnyard.

Mr. Binnell, being shown his task, removed his coat, seized the saw, and fell impetuously to work.

In ten minutes he was perspiring freely, and the log had grown to enormous dimensions. He stopped, removed his collar and cuffs, and began again, spurred to fresh efforts by the thought of the baby drinking milk. Another pause was made to remove his waistcoat.

Beads of sweat gathered on his brow, ran down his face, and disappeared into the neckband of his shirt, which began to feel like a moist rag, but still he sawed furiously on. His arms and back ached atrociously with the unaccustomed demand upon his muscles, and the palm of his shapely, well-kept right hand felt as if it were being slowly blistered. He changed to the left. But that was no better, and he changed back again.

For a while his employer stood and watched him, offering an occasional suggestion as to the proper method of handling a saw, but finally he sauntered off, his grim mouth twitching with humor, and left the laborer to his task.

When, a good hour and a half later, Mr. Binnell, limp and exhausted, but his job triumphantly finished, returned to the house, it was to find a plentiful meal on the kitchen table. He did not need a second invitation to pull out his chair, and the zest with which he attacked the simple country fare surprised him.

"Where's the boy?" he asked, when the first imperative pangs of his hunger were assuaged.

"He's in bed and asleep," answered Mrs. Taunton, who had been watching

with approval his evident appreciation of her cookery.

"He's a fine, hearty, little chap," she continued. "What might his name be?"

Mr. Binnell looked up blankly.

"His name? Oh—ah—yes. Er—his name's *Moses*," he wound up, with a sudden inspiration.

"And how old is he?" continued she, with friendly interest.

This was a poser. George Augustus finished a mouthful while he did some rapid calculating.

"Seven months," he replied glibly, washing down the guess with a gulp of tea.

Mrs. Taunton looked up with mild astonishment.

"Seven months," she repeated. "He is certainly a wonderful grown child of his age. Hear that, pa?"

"I should ha' thought, now, he was about a yearling," replied Farmer Taunton.

"Er—yes, he does look it, doesn't he?" floundered the parent pro tem of Moses. "A very precocious child."

He made a hasty resolve to remember, if any one else was seized with curiosity upon the subject, that he was a year old.

"Are ye going far?" was the next question, and it was one that recalled Mr. Binnell sharply to the situation.

"Yes, to Roswick," he replied. "And that reminds me, we ought to be getting on our way."

"Roswick?" echoed the farmer. "Why, that's a good twelve mile from here. Was ye thinking of doing it to-night?"

"Must," replied George Augustus laconically.

Mrs. Taunton telegraphed a question to her husband's eyes, and, meeting with no refusal, she ventured timidly:

"I think, sir, that is rather far to take a baby of seven months in the night air—and he's so sound asleep, too. There's a spare room in the attic—"

George Augustus hesitated, looking from one to the other.

"Missis knows best," said the old man. "Night air's not so good for



"Hush! Don't wake the baby," he added hastily. "He always wakes up hungry."

babes. By the time you've had six, you'll know more about 'em," dryly. "You've paid for your night's lodging, if you want it," he added.

"Oh, all right," said the young man hastily. "It's very good of you. I shall be glad to accept a night's hospitality for myself and—er—my little boy."

Somehow he did not feel like telling the truth to this hard-faced old farmer. He would take the child on the morrow to Bob's, whence he could telegraph to the proper authorities about it, and it was with a distinct sense of relief that he followed the old man up to his room.

It was a pleasant, wide, low-raftered room, but what attracted and held George Augustus' attention was the sight of a crib placed beside the bed,

and in it a flushed, dimpled, sturdy little form relaxed in slumber.

"The little beggar—the plucky little beggar!" murmured the young man, in whimsical astonishment over the situation in which he found himself.

After he was in bed, he reached out cautiously in the dark to see if the baby was still there.

A little, moist, velvety hand closed over his fingers, and clung to it. George Augustus did not pull it away. He lay there in the dark—the

sweet, lavender-scented June dark—with the most extraordinary sensation of his life. From that tiny grasp on his finger, a current of the sweetest feeling started, and felt its way to his heart—his careless, selfish bachelor heart—a poignant, exquisite feeling, unknown to him before.

"Is that the way fellows feel who have kids of their own?" he reflected, in wonder. "Damned if I ever could understand it before!"

Robert Daniels, country gentleman, familiarly known to his friends as "Bob," was strolling about his grounds in the fine June morning, and just beginning to wonder if it were not somewhere near the luncheon hour, when a

sudden barking of the dogs caused him to stop short and stare.

A strange intruder was entering his gate. He was bareheaded; he was dusty; he was red of face, and moist of brow, and in his arms he held a sleeping infant, whose face was shielded from the sun's rays by a straw hat.

"Might a wee'ry tramp, your honor," began the man, in a careful whine. "Hush! Don't wake the baby," he added hastily. "Moses is tired, and if he wakes up he'll be hungry. He *always* wakes up hungry," in a tone of chastened philosophy.

"Well, of all the surprises!" said Mr. Daniels slowly, removing the pipe from his mouth.

The tramp grinned cheerfully.

"I appreciate your thirst for knowledge, my boy," he said, "but mine is a long, sad tale, and I've come a long, dusty way."

"My dear fellow"—shocked into a sense of his duties as host—"do come into the house and have something at once. You look as if you needed it. And no doubt the housekeeper can take charge of this—this—"

"He's harmless, and warranted not to bite," said George Augustus mildly, as he willingly fell into pace beside his friend.

"Now, this is what I call something like," remarked Mr. Binnell, with a sigh of luxurious content.

It was an hour and a half later. He lay on the grass under a wide cedar. A bath, and a change, and a substantial luncheon had preceded this desirable consummation of affairs, and he had just finished outlining the main events of his recent adventures to his amused friend.

"My only regret," said Bob thoughtfully, "is that Aunt Jemima couldn't have seen you sawing wood for the baby's milk. I think her stony heart would have melted."

Mr. Binnell chuckled.

"But," resumed his friend, "what is your next move? I suppose you want

to send word to some proper place about the child."

"Well, that's what I thought myself," said Mr. Binnell slowly. "No doubt there are places for the taking in of foundlings."

"Plenty," assented Bob cheerfully. "I have a directory inside somewhere. We can look it up presently."

"But, you see," said Mr. Binnell, in an odd voice, "I've sort of changed my mind."

Bob looked at him inquiringly.

"Not thinking of presenting him to Aunt Jemima, are you?" he grinned.

"No, not exactly," smiled his friend. "The truth is," he blurted out suddenly, "I'm thinking of keeping him myself."

Mr. Daniels gazed at him with an expression of concern.

"You don't think you've had a touch of sunstroke, do you?"

Mr. Binnell reddened slightly.

"No, Bob, I'm serious about this," he said. "I know it sounds idiotic, but

"He broke off, catching sight of the housekeeper in the doorway.

"Hello, Moses!" he cried to the child in her arms.

The boy gave a little cry of delight and recognition, as Mr. Binnell made room for him on the chair, and they fell into a grand romp, which Bob watched with amused but slightly cynical eyes.

"You know, my dear fellow," he said presently, "if, as you say, you are absolutely strapped yourself, and Miss Binnell proves obdurate, I don't quite see—"

"My aunt has nothing to do with this," said George Augustus hastily. "This matter is strictly between Moses and myself—eh, old boy?" chucking him under the chin. "Pretty knowing beggar, that—eh?" he asked, turning to his friend.

"Moses? But why, in the name of all the prophets, Moses?" inquired Mr. Daniels, with pardonable curiosity.

"Well, it's this way," explained Mr. Binnell. "I called him so first, because of finding him, like the chap in the Bible. It *was* Moses who led those fellows through the wilderness, wasn't it? Well, anyhow, this Moses has

given me a new point of view. He's made me see some things differently. The first lick of work I ever did in my life I did for Moses, and it's given the little chap a sort of hold on me."

He paused.

"Bob"—he suddenly turned to his friend with a new seriousness of tone—"you've often said that you could put me in the way of a good job. I don't know what it is. I haven't been interested in the prospect of a job before. I haven't wanted one for myself. I could always knock along somehow, and work seemed a beastly grind."

Bob looked at him curiously, but did not interrupt.

"But I want one now," continued his friend. "I am going to work."

"It will still be a beastly grind," interposed Bob gently.

"Yes, I know that. But you see"—he ran his fingers through the baby's short rings of hair—"you see, it's dif-

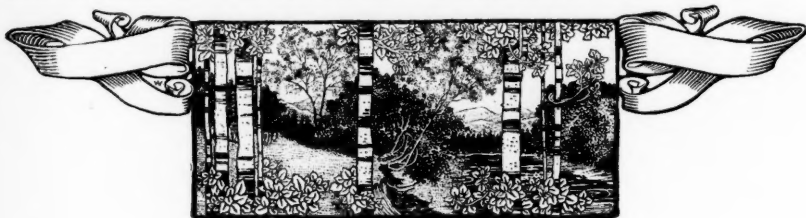
ferent when you are working for some one besides yourself. Curious what a lot of difference it *does* make! I've never been willing to work for myself—but I *am* willing to work for Moses. I'm going to bring him up as if he were my son; give him a chance in life. We talked it all out this morning on the way here, and we understand each other. I'm going to work for him till he's twenty-five—that's the contract we've made—and then he's going to turn in and work for his old dad, and let him loaf the rest of his life, if he wants to."

He looked up with his sunny, indomitable, Irish smile.

"Is that job still open, Bob?"

Bob turned his head, looked him in the eyes, and then held out his hand for a hearty grip.

"Rather!" he said quietly. "And you can count on me for Moses' godfather," he added, with a smile.



Highroad and Byroad

TRAVEL is a joy a while
On a road so hard and white—
To the hoofbeat, mile on mile,
Ringing as an anvil might.
Tidy farm and field flit by,
Stately homes their turrets lift,
But the brief joy moments fly,
All *too* hard the pace, and swift!

Lass, there winds a little way
Worth a score such glaring miles.
Blackberry tangles bind and stay
Laggard footsteps; moss-grown stiles—
Beckon to a shady seat;
Cherry boughs are gemmed above—
Such a pace and pathway, sweet,
Vagabonds and lovers love!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



ILLUSTRATED BY L. F. GRANT

WHEN Mrs. Martin Hinsdale Price began going into the rug department at Randolph Madison's big store, she didn't know a Kermanshah from a Bokhara, or a Beluchistan from a Koultuk; which argues nothing to the discredit of Mrs. Price. Like many another intelligent woman with a leaning toward the artistic, Mrs. Price had never been possessed of sufficient uninvested capital to warrant an interest in Persian rugs, nor had an overcrowded flat in the heart of a dusty city offered any temptation to indulge in the incongruity of Oriental carpets.

But the purchase of a suburban home had decidedly stretched the boundaries of the desirable, so that when she strolled among piles of rugs, mellow and harmonious, beneath panoplied berdeliks, and across silky treasures of the Eastern loom, it was to feel pleasurably thrilled by the knowledge that she would soon have to be buying something for her reception hall.

It is true that at such times her conscience reminded her that she really had no business to be loitering in the Oriental room; but, then, what woman ever shops for anything so important as a rug without a preliminary "look around"?

It was upon one of these occasions that her feet stopped of their own accord before a long, narrow rug that hung suspended from the ceiling in what happened to be a most favorable position. With the unerring judgment of one who has had much practice in guessing such riddles as how many yards of lace insertion it will take to trim a little girl's party frock, Mrs. Price immediately decided that the rug was about fifteen feet long, and something more than three in width.

She walked around it, and stood in front of it; got the light on it at this angle, and at that; studied it between half-closed lids—as she had been taught to study her plaster casts at school—and finally succeeded in attracting the attention of a well-mannered young clerk, who came forward with a word of apology for having kept her waiting.

Mrs. Price reluctantly withdrew her innocently worshipful gaze; and, in an attempt to gain information without directly asking for it, faltered:

"I was just looking around to-day. Is this—a Kermanshah?"

She had caught sight of the name on a rug near by; she hoped that she had pronounced it correctly. Mrs. Price was a pretty woman. If she had a

weakness, it was a childish desire to seem a well-informed one.

"No; that's a Kurdistan!" The young clerk was deferential. As it often happened when she was bluffing, Mrs. Price's blunder had not been startling. "I can show you some Kermanshahs—but not in the runners."

"Oh, no—don't trouble. I want a—*a runner!*" said Mrs. Price decisively, gulping the new word with courageous adaptability. "But I really haven't time to stop to-day. If you will give me your card—"

The young man produced it smilingly. He was well trained.

For six days Mrs. Price, self-denyingly, kept away from Randolph Madison's. That she had actually feared to ask the price of the rug was humiliating; but during those six days her trim little heels never clacked across the waxed floor from vestibule door to stairway that, in fancy, her feet didn't sink instead into the soft, thick pile of a Kurdish runner.

When she looked at the hard, yellow shininess of the floor, she saw instead a wonderful field of Persian blue, with a quaintly conventional arboreal design through the center of it, and a wonderful border of blue and olives, old golds and soft, dull reds. It was perfectly useless for her to tell herself that it was much too rich a thing to be congruous in the middle-class daintiness of her little home. She felt that if she might just have that Kurdish runner, all the other things would somehow be added to it by Scriptural promise.

When a week had elapsed, Mrs. Martin Hinsdale Price discovered that they were out of kitchen soap, and that she needed some elastic. One can always save car fare into town by attending a sale; so she took an early morning train, and noon found her walking briskly through the Oriental room of Randolph Madison's rug department.

She had no intention of looking for the affable young clerk. What she wanted was a chance to examine that rug at her leisure, and ask questions, if necessary, without being committed to its purchase.

An elderly gentleman waited upon her—one who had evidently grown old in the rug business; for what he didn't know about Persian rugs in general, and Kurdistans in particular, was not worth knowing. He pointed out the fascinating little line of red embroidered on the webbing at one end, dilated on the wonderful vegetable coloring as against the vulgar aniline dyes, and enthusiastically explained the elements of design.

Now, no self-respecting woman who has ever been at the mercy of a really good salesman can fail to understand the sudden temptation to buy that shook Mrs. Price from her economical reserves into an irresistible longing to justify the flattering attention of the respectful old gentleman beside her. The price had startled her; but, after all, one couldn't expect a genuine Kurdistan for a song. She pursed her lips thoughtfully.

"And this—is one hundred and twenty—I think you said?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I like it better than the higher-priced ones; don't you?"

"There's a great deal of individuality in the design," assented the old gentleman.

And at that moment, from across a heap of square Kermanshahs, a ponderous lady, with a fat voice and clothes that looked as though they required an army of pins and bolts of tape to hold them in place, announced arrogantly:

"That five-hundred-dollar one would be exactly what I want, if it were larger. My, I think you ask enough for them! I got a *genuine antique* at Marony's last year for seven hundred and fifty!"

There was something in the speech that humiliated Mrs. Price—more for the other woman than herself, although her own purchase dwindled pitifully by comparison. But it was so silly to parade one's wealth like that. Her eyes met the old gentleman's gravely; a little look of understanding, faintly tinged with superiority and amusement, passed between them. At least *she* could not afford to haggle.

"I think I'll let you send that one out.

Better hold it for me till Thursday. I'll pay a deposit on it, and they can collect the balance when it is delivered," she added hastily, anticipating his "Cash or charge?"

She had a sneaking notion that the rug itself might save her from the consequences of her impulse by proving glaringly unsuitable. She was alone in the house when it came; the children were at school and the maid at market. She undid the cords with trembling fingers, carefully laying aside the bill.

Almost she hoped—but the Kurdish runner came gallantly up to her recollections. It fitted the space as though it had been designed for it. Far from cheapening the walls and woodwork, as she had feared, it enriched them. The wintry sunlight, through the stained-glass windows, converted the rare blue into a field of lapis lazuli, over which the soul of Mrs. Martin Hinsdale Price gloated in a veritable riot of reckless extravagance. The only inharmonious note was the other rug, and—well, that *could* be replaced. There were more Kurdistans at Randolph Madison's.

And yet, before the maid's returning footsteps crunched upon the gravel walk, the Kurdish runner, reverently rolled and tied back into its original package, but protected this time by an old sheet, had been lugged up the stairs, bumping distressfully on each step, and hidden away in the very darkest corner of the storeroom.

Like a woman who buys more expensive jewels than her position warrants, and then locks them in a vault for fear the world will think her husband is gambling, Mrs. Martin Hinsdale Price resolved on the temporary incarceration of the Kurdish runner. It was true she had only appropriated one hundred and twenty dollars of the money for the last payment on the house, and she had six months in which to put it back.

It was as much hers as Martin's. Together they had earned their home by dint of many economies; together they often discussed the extravagances they would indulge in as soon as the last payment—a thousand dollars, due in May—had been made.

Still, Mrs. Price felt that circumstances might arise in which she would simply have to pocket her pride and return the rug. As an old customer of the store, whose bills were always paid promptly, Mrs. Price felt that this might be managed without too much groveling.

But the weeks went by, and the rug did not go back. Instead, Mrs. Price said farewell to peace, and inaugurated a series of petty economies which had not been part of the household system since the early days of her marriage. Cream disappeared from the milk bill, to be replaced by the top milk, which fooled no one; omelets and scrambled eggs took the place of the soft-boiled, which could scarcely be reckoned at one egg and a quarter per person; pot roasts masqueraded as their more expensive cousins; and hens in pies and stews gave the broiler and the casserole a long vacation.

She locked up the sugar, and she doled out the shortening; and the maid began to show signs of restlessness, and her husband to declare that the coffee was not as good as it used to be. And all this, in spite of the fact that Mrs. Martin Hinsdale Price had scorned the woman who, for the sake of show, economized on her table.

The result was not entirely unpremeditated. The maid gave notice. Mr. Price and the children were properly sympathetic when they returned to find mother flushed and tired in the kitchen. It made them feel selfish to gather in the living room and leave her to wrestle with the aftermath of roasts and deserts; yet, perversely enough, she refused help; in her heart disdaining to make her family suffer for her perfidy.

To her husband's repeated entreaties that she get a girl, any kind of a girl—white, black, or green, as he facetiously suggested—she turned a dubious face to mask the obstinacy of her purpose. Winter was a bad time to get a good girl to go into the suburbs; they were so wasteful, and you couldn't trust them; they lied so—this with the saving grace of a guilty blush.

Gradually her family grew accustomed—without, however, being recon-

ciled—to the new order of things. Her husband missed the quiet hand at the helm which had kept from his masculine eyes all hint of rough sailing. Marion was no longer softly sympathetic and restful. She was so full of the cantankerousness of the furnace that the contrariness of his business partner no longer surprised her. The ironing of Bessie's school dresses grew in importance out of all proportion to the solution of Bessie's sums; while the holes

"It's a coat for Bessie," she explained ruefully. "She has a school coat, perfectly good; but it's really not warm enough for the winters out here. Now, this—just look at the warmth of that material!"

"Y-yes," said Mrs. Dudley Barton dubiously. "It's awful stuff to handle, though, isn't it? Couldn't you put the sleeves in by machine?"

"It's too thick!" wailed Marion. "I tried it, and broke two needles. No,



Mrs. Dudley Barton drew herself up rather stiffly. "Of course I'll take it," she said.

in Dick's stockings ceased to be mute testimonials—dear to his mother's heart—of his prowess in gymnasium and field.

In fact, Marion was entirely at outs with her little world; and she realized with something of a lump in her throat that they were beginning to notice it.

And it was in this mood that Mrs. Dudley Barton came upon her one day, struggling, between tears of vexation and nervousness, with some thick, brown material, evidently quite beyond her slender fingers.

there isn't anything for it but to sew them, in and out, as I'm doing. I only hope they'll be in the right place when it's done."

"Why don't you wait and try it on her?"

Mrs. Price blushed.

"Oh, it's a surprise. I don't want her to see it till it's finished. She's been pestering me for one of those blue military coats—you know how children are. There's no warmth in them, and they get shabby so soon. Now, this——"

Mrs. Dudley Barton changed the sub-

ject. She had recognized the cloth; but she didn't think it would be tactful to say so. She broke brusquely into the object of her visit.

"Why weren't you at the Civic Club yesterday? I looked for you. Professor Kopfwesen turned out to be awfully interesting. His subject was the modern rush after nonessentials. You really *should* have heard him!"

"I dare say I would have been much edified!" snapped Mrs. Price, grown suddenly vicious as she pricked her finger for the twentieth time. "I do so love to hear a man talk of something he knows nothing about! Unfortunately, I was kept at home by the vulgar necessity of attending to nonessential pork and beans."

Mrs. Dudley Barton laughed good-naturedly.

"Now, don't make me hungry, Marion; I'm on a diet. What I came for is this: The club is going to give a tea for the Girl's Friendly, and we want a little music. Will you play?"

Mrs. Price gave her friend an exasperated stare; then she replied promptly:

"I will not!"

"Oh; but I said I thought——"

"You had no business to, Nell."

"But you offered to—some time."

"That was before—— Look at my hands! I wonder you have the nerve to suggest such a thing!"

"I didn't know," faltered her friend, wondering wildly what could have put the usually obliging Marion into such a temper.

"Well, you know *now*! I haven't touched a piano for six weeks, and I couldn't play, if I wanted to, with hands all stiffened and hardened up like that. It's the furnace!"

"You poor old dear, of course you couldn't!" said Mrs. Barton soothingly. "It's a shame you're having such a time getting help, Marion. I know what it is. When I came out here first I had six girls in one month; but the seventh stayed with me three years. You've just got to keep drumming away at the agencies till they get you what you want."

Listening to her good-natured chatter, Marion found herself wondering what on earth she had ever seen in Nellie Barton. This was the woman who had been her dearest friend since childhood. As in a dream, she heard Mrs. Barton running on about her cousin's wedding present, and bewailing the five hours spent in looking for a duplicate to the cut-glass pitcher she—Marion—had won at the Progressive Whist tournament in the spring.

"Tony thought it so handsome, and I had set my heart on one just like it. But my! They're so expensive."

"How much?" asked Marion dully.

"You can't touch anything under fifteen dollars. I was surprised. The club only paid ten dollars for the one you have; I was on the committee that bought it. Of course, we got a rebate on account of dealing with Mrs. Peyton's husband."

Marion heard herself saying—it hardly seemed like her voice:

"You can have mine for ten dollars."

Mrs. Barton started.

"Why, Marion! You didn't think I was hinting at such a thing as that? Our Whist Club, that we've been members of for seven years! Why, I wouldn't think of such a thing."

"I wish you would. I never use it."

"Why not?"

"Oh, it's so heavy; and I'm afraid the children would break it. Honestly, I don't mind selling it to you, if you still want it."

Mrs. Dudley Barton drew herself up rather stiffly.

"Of course I'll take it." She did not say that she had already bought Tony's wedding present. "If you'll do it up, Marion, I'll take it right along with me."

At the door she softened a bit toward the tired little figure for whom she'd always felt such a tenderness.

"Shall I see you on Friday at Donnelly's?"

"I haven't time."

"Oh, make time! The idea! You ought to get out more, instead of sitting here stitching all day."

"The children must have something to wear," retorted Marion sharply.

She could have bitten her tongue out the moment she said it—it sounded like a reflection on her husband. She hoped it wouldn't occur to Nellie to think of it that way.

But that was exactly how Nellie did think of it, astonishing her phlegmatic husband by asking so many questions with regard to the financial rating of Martin Price's firm that he finally demanded an explanation.

"Well," said Mrs. Barton reflectively, "Marion hasn't been anywhere all winter, or had a new stitch to wear. She's been without a girl for two months, and shows no intention of getting one; and to-day I found her making over one of Mart's old ulsters for Bessie, a thing she always said didn't pay. Of course, I didn't let on I recognized it. It isn't as though she was naturally close; she isn't! And then—oh, well, lots of other little things."

She shut her lips firmly on the cut-glass pitcher episode. Not even to her husband would she have betrayed Marion in anything but an admirable light.

"H'm!" mused that gentleman. "Does sound sort of funny, doesn't it? By Jove! I'll have to look into this a bit. I wonder if that gas engine isn't panning out as well as he expected? Gee!



Marion spread before the amazed eyes of her friend the Kurdish runner.

I'm glad you told me. Gray and I were thinking of going into that with him."

"Now, Dud!" expostulated Mrs. Barton.

"Oh, I dare say it isn't anything but your imagination, old girl; but it won't hurt to be a little careful."

The long winter months wore away; and Mrs. Martin Hinsdale Price seemed to wear away with them. Spring came, and found Mrs. Price pale as a snow-drop, nervous and irritable, yet moderately certain of results. The thirtieth of May dawned, and a certain payment of one thousand dollars was made prompt-

ly at eleven o'clock, and Mrs. Price, lunching with her husband, for the first time in six months, laughed, and chatted, and didn't care what anything cost.

Mrs. Barton stopped in for a moment the next day. She'd been so chary of her visits that she was rather surprised at the warmth of her welcome. They stood in the hall—awkward as two children anxious to make up, yet rather at sea with regard to each other—chatting of immaterial nothings. The front door was open, letting in sunshine and fragrant puffs of balmy air. Mrs. Barton looked helplessly down at the floor for inspiration.

"You never got that rug you wanted for the hall, did you, Marion?"

The next moment she bit her lip in vexation. After all her self-schooling, to say the wrong thing!

But Marion was laughing helplessly, hysterically. Suddenly she caught the bewildered woman by the hand and rushed her up the stairs to the store-room.

There was dust on the yellowing sheet. With scissors caught up from the sewing table in passing, she cut the cord, pushed boxes and trunks to one side, flung up the shades, and spread before the amazed eyes of her friend the Kurdish runner.

"Why—it's perfectly *beau-tiful*! What on earth are you doing with it up here?"

Between laughter and tears, apologies and protestations, Marion unburdened her soul. Mrs. Barton's first remark was characteristic.

"Well, if that isn't just like a woman! I declare, if you didn't look so little and white, I'd take you over my knee and spank you, Marion Price. You dear lit-

tle idiot, you! Are you going to tell your husband?"

"I'll have to!" sighed Marion. "Do you know, it's just like a wall between us. Oh!" she wailed. "When I think of all the petty fibs I've told, and the mean little things I've done! Why, even the children think I'm getting stingy. I'm sure I don't know what I'm going to do with the hateful thing! I don't believe I'll ever be able to endure the sight of it now."

Mrs. Barton thought a minute. She was a woman of audacious resolves.

"I believe Randolph Madison's would take it back. You know what a reputation they have for being obliging; and any one can see it's never been on the floor. You haven't a bit of nerve, Marion. Let me ask them for you. I'll bet I can get them to do it."

Mrs. Price opened her mouth; then shut it again, crimsoning.

"I don't believe I'd like to do that, Nellie," she stammered, grasping after her treasure as she saw it slipping from her. "I'll have to tell Mart about it, anyway. I'm sure he'll say I might as well keep it. After all, *I've paid for it!*"

"Well, I should say you have!" agreed Mrs. Barton.

If her hearty confirmation was capable of a double interpretation, Mrs. Price did not notice it. She bent down, and detached the little price tags.

"Come on, Nell!" she cried, with the joyous inconsistency of a schoolgirl. "I'm going to take it downstairs. You get hold of the other end. I'm just crazy to have you see how it looks on the floor."

Mrs. Dudley Barton smiled sympathetically. Being a woman, she did not need to be told that the cost of the Kurdish runner was forgotten.





"His name," she announced impressively, "is Peter."

According to Madame Zabriskie

By Mary Carr

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

EVERELYN had gone to interview Madame Zabriskie in the most skeptical spirit. She had not the slightest faith in clairvoyants, she asserted, as they left the motor car at the village library, and walked through shabby side streets to Madame Zabriskie's little house.

"I know just what she will say," she remarked. "I've been to fortune tellers before. She will mention the fact that I am susceptible and have had various love affairs, and will hint darkly about a red-haired woman, who is jealous and must be avoided, and then hold out as

a reward a dark-haired Adonis, who will be as good and virtuous as he is beautiful. I want it distinctly understood, Mildred, that I am only coming to chaperon you."

But when she was actually seated in the clairvoyant's stuffy, dimly lighted little sanctum, with the mountainous Madame Zabriskie firmly wedged into an armchair several sizes too small for her, she began to have a strange, uncanny creeping of the flesh. She had never seen any one go into a trance before, and the closed eyes, the changed voice, the strange contortions that

passed now and then over the fat, pink face were all rather terrifying. She had a childish desire to get up and run away.

But as the woman went on with her monologue, in the high, childish voice that her Indian spirit control assumed, Evelyn became more and more astonished. It was all so surprisingly true, the description of her distant home, of the various members of her family, of events in her own life. Why, madame was telling her things about herself that no one in the wide world knew!

"It's mind reading," she told herself. "I mustn't let her read my mind." And in a panic she tried vainly to make it quite blank.

For a moment the clairvoyant's monotonous voice ceased; then she began to mutter in an unintelligible jargon, suddenly coming back to the broken English her Indian spirit affected.

"Many chieftains have wanted to wed you, my child, but not one of them, brave as they were, has touched your heart, but now I see one coming to you." Her voice grew joyous. "You will not meet him in the wigwam of your father, but far away in a larger wigwam, where many people come and go. He will be all your heart could wish. He will take you to a country, far, far from here, a country in the North, a land all mists and cold. I see high mountains there, rocky and purple with little flowers—heath—yes—heather, they call it. The country is called Scotland. You will be married on the second of November, instead of in the month of brides. I cannot tell you your chieftain's name—yet—wait—" Again she seemed to be groping in the darkness for some thing; then her fat, pink face beamed. "Good little Lola!" she exclaimed to the Indian who dominated her. "That's it! I knew you would tell me. His name," she announced impressively, "is Peter."

Evelyn started, and had a wild desire to laugh at the anticlimax.

"She told me I was to marry a Scotchman named Peter," she told Mildred, as they hurried back to the motor car. "A Scotchman named Peter."

"How unromantic!" exclaimed Mildred. "Madame Zabriskie was horribly disappointing, I thought. She did not tell me a single exciting thing. It was all very tame and domestic—marry, and settle down, and have half a dozen children—that sort of stupid stuff. You should have heard the exciting things she told Anne Penning when she went. Her hair stood on end. She said she positively felt spirits in the room, and she kept jumping and thinking one was standing just behind her all the time."

"She did tell me some remarkable things about the family," Evelyn conceded. "Things she could not possibly know. On the whole she was rather uncanny. Of course she can't know about the future—the Peter part was an amusing anticlimax, but as far as character delineation and mind reading go, she was not half bad."

The two had gone to interview Madame Zabriskie without confiding in any other members of the house party out at the Jim Montgomery's country place, but at dinner Mildred could not resist telling the story of the afternoon.

"She told Evelyn she was to marry a Scotchman named Peter, on the second of November, and live in Edinburgh," she announced, with dancing eyes.

"The saints forbid!" cried Billy Montgomery, their host's younger brother.

Evelyn leaned forward, all eagerness and distress, the rose-colored light bringing out all the gold of her hair and touching her cheeks with added color.

"Just fancy a big, brawny, sandy Scotchman named Peter!" she cried.

Every one laughed at the tragedy in her voice.

"I can see him now," Jim Montgomery exclaimed. "He will say 'Hoot mon' and 'fash,' and he will eat nothing but scones, and bannocks, and cockaleekie soup, and finnan haddie, and haggis. You will live in a tall lande in Edinburgh, or else some desolate moor place."

"Don't," Evelyn shuddered. "In the first place," she announced solemnly,



Schuyler Osborne suddenly proposed to her on the summit of Eagle Cliff.

"I don't intend to marry at all." Groans and laughter filled the air, but she ignored the interruption, and went on. "And in the second place, I wouldn't marry a Scotchman named Peter, if he were the last man left in this world."

Billy Montgomery grew cheerful, even radiant.

"Thank Heaven, my parents had the foresight not to christen me Peter," he confided to the ceiling.

"I don't know anybody nice named Peter, do you?" Evelyn asked.

"There's St. Peter and Peter Pan," Stanley Clark volunteered.

"No, but really in our set, I mean," Evelyn said so seriously that they all laughed.

"Come, let us have our coffee on the

terrace." Mrs. Montgomery rose. "It's cooler out there."

She led the way out through the long French windows on to the moon-flooded, stone-paved terrace, overlooking the great garden. Through the pines the Sound was sparkling, as if handfuls of diamonds had been strewn on black velvet.

"What do you suppose Peter's last name is?" Mrs. Jim settled herself among the cushions of her low chair.

Evelyn covered her ears with her pretty white hands.

"Don't say it," she implored. "If you people love me, never mention the name Peter again."

But of course this was only adding powder to the fire. Though they all did love her, they could not resist the temptation of teasing Evelyn. Billy Montgomery, the irrepressible, at once gave a party at the porter's lodge for some of the old men of the village, and induced the unsuspecting Evelyn to come and help amuse them. Not until she was in the presence of ten ancient gaffers did Billy announce:

"This is a Peter party, Evelyn. They are all named Peter." And he joyously watched her face.

It was true! There was Peter, the one-legged third gardener; Peter, the porter's grandfather, toothless and genial, leaning on his cane. Three Peters he had procured from the workhouse, and various others he had scoured the countryside to obtain. For Billy was honest about it; he did not invite any one who could not show good proof that he legitimately bore the name of Peter. But Evelyn was game.

"It's a lovely party," she cried, as she passed the tobacco to the forlorn old men, who looked on her as an angel dropped in their midst, nodding their palsied old heads and smiling toothlessly. She watched them eat their sandwiches and cake, and drink their beer with interest.

"Really, Billy, it was sweet of you to give them so much pleasure," she exclaimed, and Billy glowed with satisfaction, quite forgetting that his first motive in giving the party was not that of generosity and good will to men named Peter.

There was no end to the teasing that Evelyn had to endure. If she went to a tea or a dance, the first question at dinner or breakfast would be: "Have you met Peter yet?"

Billy even went so far as to ask, when stray men were led up to be introduced to the house party from Pinelands: "Would you mind very much telling me if your first name is Peter?" much to Evelyn's consternation.

One morning at breakfast among Evelyn's mail was a note in Margaret Battell's well-known handwriting, and, as every one knew her and demanded instant news of her, Evelyn proceeded to read it aloud.

Please take pity on us and come to the "Sands" for the week-end. It's glorious here now, and we will have a quiet time—only the Jerry Coghlans, Anne Griffiths, and Peter Campbell.

Every one laughed at Evelyn's look of horror.

"Peter Campbell," she repeated. "Yes, it's certainly that. You can't make anything else out of it, can you, Emily?"

"No, it's Peter, all right." Mrs. Jim examined it carefully through lorgnettes. "What fun! I'm so glad he has come at last, Evelyn. I hate to have you leave us, but of course I cannot stand in the way of your future happiness, dear child."

"And he's a Scotchman, too!" Billy cried. "It's Fate, Evelyn; it's Fate."

"If you think I am going to the 'Sands,' you are all very much mistaken," Evelyn announced, with dignity. "I am dying to go, I adore Margaret, and I love the dear old place, but of course I couldn't think of going, under the circumstances."

"My dear Evelyn," Jim Montgomery said solemnly, "if Fate has seized you by the back hair in true Homeric fashion, don't flatter yourself you can escape. If you are to marry a Scotchman named Peter, even if you should fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, Fate—and Peter—would find you out. It is written!"



"And that I religiously keep the name I was christened—Peter."

"But consider," Clark suggested, "how decent and respectable the name Peter Campbell is. His paternal name might be MacGillicuddy."

"It couldn't be—that's Irish," Evelyn cried.

But Billy fell upon the name joyously.

"It has a 'Mac' in it, so it might be Scotch. Mrs. Peter MacGillicuddy. Oh, lovely! I shall call you that."

And "Mrs. Peter MacGillicuddy" she was until she left Pinelands.

After a summer spent in avoiding possible Peters, Evelyn went with her family to Lake Mohonk for October. In that romantic spot in trying to escape the very evident attentions of Sir Peter Callendar, of Edinburgh; of Mr. Peter McQuire, of St. Louis, and of Mr. Peter Copley Tremont, of Boston, Evelyn fell straightway, metaphorically at least, into the arms of Schuyler Osborne. He was a true New Yorker, the name Schuyler was a long way from the obnoxious Peter, so Evelyn considered him quite innocuous, and paddled with him on the little emerald green, rock-girt lake, rode and drove with him over wonderful mountain roads, strolled with him through miles of trails in the primeval forest, and sat with him in romantic summer-houses, overlooking fifty miles of wooded mountains and fertile valleys. When after a fortnight of this idyllic life, Schuyler Osborne suddenly proposed to her on the summit of Eagle Cliff, she as suddenly realized that, if she did not marry Schuyler Osborne, life might as well end then and there.

When Billy Montgomery heard that she was engaged to a Mr. Osborne, of New York, he telegraphed to Evelyn's amusement:

Is his name Peter?

She wrote at once:

No, it's Schuyler, and the Osbornes came over with Hendrick Hudson. I am going to have him ask you to be an usher, if you will be good. I'll warn you now the wedding won't be before spring, so you will have plenty of time to save your pennies to give us something nice. Isn't it one on Madame Zabriskie?

To which he responded by laconic telegram:

You had better knock on wood.

That was on the tenth of October. It was on the thirteenth, which happened to fall on Friday, that Evelyn and her fiancé, coming out of the post office together, strolled through the quaint old room to a corner overlooking the lake to read their letters.

"This is odd!" Osborne cried, holding out a letter so Evelyn could see the address. "I haven't been addressed that way in years."

In a stiff foreign-looking hand, Evelyn saw "P. Schuyler Osborne, Esq.," and the postmark was Edinburgh.

"Schuyler!" she exclaimed. "What does P. stand for?"

Osborne laughed.

"Well, to tell the truth, I never was fond of it," he said. "And I dropped my first name when I was in college. I was named after my Scotch grandfather, Peter Schuyler, of Edinburgh."

He had torn open the letter, and was too absorbed in its contents to notice Evelyn's expression, but suddenly he looked up, his face rather white.

"My dear girl," he cried, trying to control himself. "This is news. It's from my Uncle Peter's solicitor in Edinburgh—the uncle who died a month ago. It seems the dear old duffer has left all his money to me—a pile, too—on condition that I live for six months in the year in Edinburgh, or at his place in the Highlands, Vrackie Castle, and that I religiously keep the name I was christened—Peter."

"Is there anything else—Peter?" she said weakly, when she had finished.

"Only one thing," Osborne leaned a little nearer, his eyes on her face. "Dear little Evelyn, it's asking a lot of you, but *please* don't refuse. I've got to cross as soon as possible—by November at the latest, to settle things over there. Won't you marry me at once and come, too? I may have to be gone for months, and I can't leave you, now that I've found you at last."

"Shall we say the second of November, Peter?" she asked gently.



What the Editor Has to Say

IT is possible that the last number of SMITH's may have come to you a day or so after the regular date of issue, and that this number may also reach you a little late. We are sorry for this, but it is not our fault. A change recently inaugurated in the Post-Office Department is responsible for the delay.

A large class of the periodical matter handled by the Post Office, and formerly sent all the way by mail, is henceforth to be sent by fast freight to certain distributing points throughout the country, and thence sent by mail to its destination. This takes a little longer, and we are now in process of readjusting our schedules. We don't expect to change our date of publication. We hope that the quality of this number of the magazine will make up for any delay in its arrival. The change in procedure in the Post-Office Department has our approval. It is a step in the direction of running the department on a business basis that will ultimately turn what used to be a chronic deficit into a considerable surplus.

THE next issue of SMITH's will be a Christmas number. Whatever your religion, if you are accustomed to think much about the celebration of holidays and the meaning that lies behind the celebration, you will agree that the Christmas celebration is a good thing. It stands for unselfishness, for the consideration not only of the rights of others, but for their pleasures. We strive for ourselves and for our own

throughout the year, and it is well to remember at this one season that the highest happiness, the highest good of mankind, comes from unselfishness. And so the Christmas gifts and the Christmas greetings have some real meaning behind the formality.

THERE are four good Christmas stories in the next issue of the magazine. Each one has a touch of the holiday feeling that would alone give character to a number of the magazine. "The Christmas Conspiracy at Copper" is by Anne O'Hagan. "The Guerdon of the Christmas Baby" is a charming Christmas story of another sort by Nalbro Bartley. Then there is "Miss Althea's Christmas," by Anne Wither-spoon, and "For Reward of Service," by Grace Keon.

THE complete novel which opens the next issue of the magazine is "An Architect of Fate," by Emma Lee Walton. This is one of the best stories she has ever written. You are already familiar with her work, and know that this means a great deal. Then there is an installment of Mrs. Martin's great serial, "The Fighting Doctor," which has the rare and desirable quality of growing better and more interesting to the very end. Also there are another of Holman F. Day's inimitable stories about Captain Sproul, a splendid little essay on "The Wage-Earning Wife," by Hildegard Lavender, a little talk on marriage by Charles Battell Loomis, and a lot of other interesting things.

The Fascination of "Make-Up"

By Dr. Lillian Whitney

THERE never has been a time in the history of any people, modern or ancient, civilized or barbarous, in which woman has not "made up." The desire to enhance her charms is instinctive. The savage belle chews the betel nut to darken her teeth; the Chinese lady suffers torture in silence to reduce the size of her feet; and the modern woman, the fairest and most highly developed creature in the evolution of the species, does not scorn the paint pot or rabbit foot when the question of looking her best is being called into account.

Ideas of beauty change. Not so very long ago invalidism was fashionable; women cultivated a languid air, and drank vinegar to make themselves look pale and interesting. To-day, more sensible views prevail; and a healthy, wholesome-looking girl is a delight to the eye. In former years, it was considered unnecessary, and even immodest, for girls to take part in athletics; and the decorous walk, or rather stroll or saunter, was believed to be sufficient exercise for the fair sex. All our girls of to-day would probably shock their great-grandmammias—for there are no grandmothers now—and be called hoydens; but what a difference in physique, in splendid vitality, and in good looks they present!

And what a tremendously rejuvenating effect all this modernism has upon women who are no longer girls! Why, only a short time back, women of twenty-five and thirty were termed old maids; and certainly a good many of them looked it. What *has* become of them? One *never* sees an old maid now. More freedom of thought and action, greater attention to one's physical needs, personal hygiene, the almost overpowering rapidity with which she

is emancipating herself from the thralldom of servitude, as it were, have banished the old maid, with her lackluster eye, her fallow, hollow cheeks, wisps of hair, and shrinking manner. She is no more.

There is absolutely no necessity for a young woman to "make up." It gives her an ordinary, commonplace look, because youth in itself is lovely, and one simply destroys the very essence of it by a tawdry substitute. Furthermore, a young face is not a good background for a "make-up." This is well shown on the stage. Some of the youngest-looking "girls" in the chorus are really old, and some of the "misses" resemble mature women.

Upon the face of a woman who has permanently lost the bloom of youth—in other words, who has passed the milestone of her *second* youth—a dexterous application of beauty aids is startlingly rejuvenating. Nor does the effect embrace only the complexion, and end there. On the contrary, it penetrates the entire being, for, with the assurance that she is looking her best, a woman *feels* her best. Knowing that she appears to advantage, she is full of confidence in herself, is complete mistress of herself, is in command of all her forces. Thus equipped, she is enabled to put forth her best efforts, and success cannot fail to crown her endeavors, whether they are directed commercially, professionally, or socially. Success can only come with endeavor, and endeavor must be inspired by confidence within.

Who, then, would condemn the harmless and subtle aids of "make-up"?

In order to be effective, and to simulate nature so perfectly that the art is lost in the art, requires a skillful touch, and an acquaintance with the best and

safest means at our command. Women who rouge indiscriminately and who powder heavily always develop very ugly skins. The pores enlarge, the skin becomes coarse, dry, and, on close examination, is covered with fine wrinkles. When the lungs are plugged up they cannot breathe. Just precisely the same thing happens to the skin when all the pores are clogged, and the glands with which it is supplied are bottled up; it withers, and after a while resembles a crumpled piece of parchment.

A woman past middle life is justified in making up whenever the occasion demands that she look her best. If she is not acquainted with the art, it would be far better that she place herself in the hands of an expert, for a novice is sure to bungle frightfully. Some women are adepts at it from the start; others are remarkably apt; and some, with a "heavy" touch, never learn, and must always call upon a professional.

Every now and then one hears of a complexion "enamel," the application of which makes one ravishingly beautiful. But, of course, this is all nonsense. There really is no such thing. With the French, the art of "make-up" has well-nigh reached perfection; and they have brought into use two preparations that are called *Massage Enamel* and *Liquid Enamel*. These are misnomers, as they do not actually cover the skin with a "peach-and-cream" complexion mask, but are merely powders, one in liquid and one in paste form. These formulas

will be sent upon application to any one who wishes to try them.

Women who are blessed with a clear skin and a good circulation—which argues for good health and is the best beautifier—can usually insure themselves a fine color for hours by bathing the face and neck fifteen or twenty minutes with very hot water. This local bath must be prolonged, and must be hot to secure the desired result. It softens the skin and makes it as smooth

as down; and the exquisite glow which it imparts is most becoming. This glow can be brightened and made more permanent by dashing upon the face eau de cologne or toilet vinegar; or, better still, by applying a

BENZOLIN AND ALMOND LOTION.

Almond meal 3 drams
Soft soap 1 dram
Rose water 8 ounces
Strain, and add:
Tincture of benzoin 4 drams

This lotion is especially suitable for warm-weather climates or warm rooms, and can be rendered more cooling by adding



The "make-up" cream is rubbed into the skin with the finger tips.

Balsam of storax.....1 dram
Dissolved in:
Rectified spirits.....1 ounce

In order to "make up" successfully, time and care are indispensable hand-maidens, especially if we wish to present a good appearance at night, under cruel artificial lights, that bring out every defect, and when concealment with huge hats and fascinating veils is impossible.

The water used for bathing the face *must* be soft. Either rain or distilled water is best; or it can be softened with



Tint the lips heavily in the center.

borax and violet toilet ammonia; a teaspoonful of each to several quarts of water. Make a lather with pure Castile soap, and cleanse thoroughly with the finger tips. By this means you are able also to perform a gentle massage. Repeat the process several times, bathing and rinsing with several waters.

Or a delightful face bath in place of soap can be obtained by using one pound of bran and one-quarter pound of fine starch. These are mixed and put into little bags of soft muslin. The odor of violet may be imparted by adding one ounce of powdered orris root and ten grains ionone. Pour boiling water over the little bags, and use as wash rags. Then apply a "make-up" cream; almost any cream will answer. The following one is used by a famous beauty actress who at one time was a prominent society woman. It is very simple, and can be made at home by any one.

"MAKE-UP" CREAM.

Rendered lard is made by pouring boiling water on lard in a basin. The

water goes to the bottom, the lard remains on top, mingled with as much water as it will hold. This is skimmed off, put in a cloth, and the excess of water squeezed out. Scent with a few drops of oil of verbenia, attar of roses, or whatever you wish. As it grows rancid quickly, make up only what is required.

Whatever cream is used, rub it thoroughly into the face, neck, and ears, for powder will not adhere to a dry skin. Carefully wipe off all excess of cream, and apply over the arms, face, neck, et cetera, a whitening lotion, which consists of rose water, 8 ounces; oxide of zinc, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces; tincture of benzoin, 8 drops. The lotion should be patted on the skin with a small roll of absorbent cotton, and allowed to dry on. It must not be wiped off.

We are now ready to "touch up"; and the character of the preparation used for this purpose depends upon individual coloring. Some women require only a trace, the faintest blush, to bring out the light in the eyes, the shell pink of the ears, et cetera, et cetera. Others must have a decided flush, as it were, to reveal the depth and beauty of the eyes, luster to the hair, et cetera.

The preparation best liked for a delicate tinge, is the Balm of Arabia.

Cochineal	$1\frac{1}{2}$ grains
Tincture of benzoin.....	to drops
Rose water.....	1 ounce

This is applied by means of a stub—a wad of absorbent cotton on a wooden skewer—to the cheeks, well down on the neck, under, behind, and in the ears, but not just in front of them, and well into the nostrils; the nose and forehead must escape. The effect should be accentuated upon the cheeks; and here the greatest mistake is usually made. If we wish to imitate nature, we must remember that in youth the color in the cheeks is most decided in the lower parts, extending sometimes well down into the neck. As we advance in age it rises higher; and a vivid red spot on the cheek bone is frequently seen in elderly women under the stress of an exciting debate, et cetera. It is *not* pretty.

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No. 2SS51—A dresy Waist of Fine Brussels Net Over Japanese Silk, with the front exquisitely embroidered with heavy Japanese floss. This Waist has the peplum or plaited basque at the waist line, characteristic of the newest French models. This peplum may be worn outside or inside the skirt as preferred. Another charming feature of the Waist is the piping of colored Satin Messaline, which edges the collar and cuffs, and is also used with extremely pleasing effect around the armholes, as shown in the picture. Down the center of the front is an insertion of rich Chiny lace, and the same beautiful lace trims the shoulders. A chic side effect Marie Antoinette jabot of plaited Net prettily tucked and edged with German Val. lace finishes the front of Waist, in combination with nine tiny Messaline covered buttons. Where the peplum is joined to Waist, narrow Velvet ribbon is applied and a cunning little Velvet bow to match finishes the neck. The cuffs are made of tucked Net, and clusters of turks trim the Peasant-eff-et elbow-length sleeves, and extend down the full length of the back. Waist buttons invisibly in the back under a plait. Colors white, Net with black, Coronation purple, or emerald green trimming; also in even Net with King blue or Coronation purple trimming. Sizes 32 to 44 bust measure. **\$2.98**

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Any Woman Will Be Delighted With This Rich Fur Set.

No. 29SS337—Large Shawl Collar of Black Manchurian Wolf. This beautiful heavy warm fur is in high favor this season. The long, luxuriant silky black hair resembles in texture the expensive black Lynx; in fact, few people can tell the difference. The collar is about 10 inches wide in the back and amply covers the chest and shoulders. It is about 80 inches long and is trimmed on each end with two long full tails. Lined with rich black Satin. Only the finest skins are used in furs sold by us. We guarantee every piece of fur that leaves our establishment to be exactly as represented. **Price, express prepaid..... \$10.95**

No. 29SS338—Large Square Pillow Muff, of Black Manchurian Wolf, to match Shawl Collar No. 29SS337. The same soft, silky black fur has been used in this Muff and it is a perfect match. The Muff is mounted on a soft down bed and is lined throughout with satin. It is 16 inches wide, **\$8.45** Silk wrist cord attached. **Price, express prepaid..... \$8.45**

Special price for Set of Scarf and Muff described above, if sold together, **\$18.75.**

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SS337

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

This is not what we wish to imitate, but the bloom of health. Therefore, repeat the application upon the cheeks, shading it off gradually toward the eyes and lower jaw. When a heavier rouge is required, the aniline dyes must be used; and they are generally incorporated into an ointment. There are a number of very good preparations in the market, or well-tested formulas can be made at home.

BLOOM OF ROSES.

Rosanilin	75 grains
White wax	1 1/4 ounces
Spermoceti	50 grains
White petrolatum	380 grains
Alcohol	1/2 dram

Dissolve the dye in the alcohol, add this solution to the fats previously melted, and incorporate the whole together. Continue stirring until the mixture is cooled.

LIQUID ROUGE.

Calamine	1 dram
Zinc oxide	1 dram
Glycerine	1/2 dram
Rose water	1 ounce

ROUGE EN FEUILLES (LEAF ROUGE).

Circular disks about two inches in diameter are cut from thick, very smooth, highly satinized paper, covered with a layer of carmine, the adhesion of which to the paper is secured by the addition of gum arabic.

For use, all that is necessary is to breathe on the leaf, rub it over with a ball of fine cotton wool, and apply the latter to the face. This is much used by French ladies.

An absolutely harmless preparation that can easily be made at home is

BET ROUGE.

Pound the beets in a mortar, then press through a fine hair sieve or potato masher in which potatoes are "riced." To one ounce of beet juice add 1/2 ounce of alcohol; bottle, and apply to the cheeks with absorbent cotton.

Greater care must be exercised in using the heavier rouges, otherwise the coloring will look artificial. The nostrils, lobe of the ear, and the lips must never be forgotten. In touching up the

lips, a very fine brush should be used and the contour carefully followed, giving a deeper tint to the center and a very light touch as the corners are reached.

LIQUID VEGETABLE ROUGE FOR THE LIPS.

Ammonia	60 grains
Carmine	35 grains
Esprit de roses—triple	70 grains
Rose water	2 liters

This makes a large amount, that can be reduced 1/8 or 1-16.



Apply the rouge well down the cheeks and into the neck.

Or a preference may be given to a

LIP SALVE.

Oil of cloves	5 drops
Root of alkanet	15 grains
Balsam of Peru	15 grains
Spermoceti ointment	1 ounce

The root of alkanet is heated in the ointment until it becomes a bright red. It is then strained and the balsam added. Allow it to settle. When the clear liquid rises to the top, pour it off, and add the oil of cloves.

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

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It is an incentive to hunger
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All materials are of the finest quality
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mixed in spotless trays in a spotless
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ful ovens scientifically heated to
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The Pabst Extract American Girl Calendar for 1912 is an art creation worthy of more than passing notice.

The subtle charm of outdoor life, the captivating beauty of the typical American girl and the artist's masterful portrayal of man's best friend—the horse—combine to make a picture that will instantly appeal to every lover of the artistic and beautiful.

In panel form, seven inches wide and thirty-six inches long and printed in twelve delicately blended colors, this Pabst Extract American Girl Calendar will harmonize well with the furnishings of any room, home, den or office.

No advertising matter whatever, not even the title nor the months, are printed on the front.

Scores of calendars, far less artistic, are sold every year at 75c to \$2.00 each, but *we send you this calendar free*, hoping it will serve to remind you that

Pabst Extract The Best Tonic

strengthens the weak and builds up the overworked—relieves insomnia and conquers dyspepsia—helps the anaemic and turns nerve exhaustion into active, healthy vim—encourages listless convalescence to rapid recovery—assists nursing mothers and reinvigorates old age.

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PABST EXTRACT CO. Dept. 10 Milwaukee, Wis.



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Are YOUR Hands Tied?



Do you want to get on—**SUCCEED**—**earn more money?** Is there a certain line of work in which you think you could do better—if you only had the training? Or a certain kind of position you would like to hold—only you fear your “hands are tied?”

Don't let your ambition die! Don't think your hands are tied! Don't think that you can't strike out for advancement and *success*—that you do not dare, because you must eke out your daily bread—that you must go on in the same old rut as long as you live.

Get out of the crowd of ordinary *un-trained* men—whose each day's work puts them *no further ahead*.

Start your advancement **NOW**—mark the coupon with a cross opposite the occupation you prefer, mail it *to-day*, and let the International Correspondence Schools give you full information on how they can *help you* to succeed—cost but postage—you incur no obligation.

Simply let the I. C. S. tell you how they can assist you to become an **EXPERT** in your chosen work—in your spare time—at home—no matter where you live or how little you now earn.

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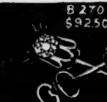
In diplomacy it doesn't matter what a man's name is. One of the officials of the Russian embassy in this country is named Uxkull. And in Los Angeles a name can be funny as you please, for that city has a tailor called Hornkow.—The Twice-a-month Popular Magazine.

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This is an invitation that no thin man or woman can afford to ignore. We invite you to try a new treatment called "**Sargol**" that helps digest the food you eat—that puts good, solid flesh on people that are thin and under weight.

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But you say you want proof! Well, here you are. Here is the statement of those who have tried—been convinced—

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CLAY JOHNSON says:

"Please send me another ten-day treatment. I am well pleased with **Sargol**. It has been the light of my life. I am getting back to my proper weight again. When I began to take **Sargol** I only weighed 138 pounds, and now, four weeks later, I am weighing 183 pounds and feeling fine."

F. GAGNON writes:

"Here is my report since taking the **Sargol** treatment. I am a man 67 years of age and was all run down to the very bottom. I had to quit work as I was so weak. Now, thanks to **Sargol**, I look like a new man. I gained 22 pounds with 23 days' treatment. I cannot tell you how happy I feel."

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"**Sargol** is certainly the grandest treatment I ever used. I took only two boxes of **Sargol**. My weight was 129 pounds and now I weigh 140 and feel better than I have for five years. I am now as fleshy as I want to be, and shall certainly recommend **Sargol**, for it does just exactly what you say it will do."

Full address of any of these people if you wish.

Probably you are now thinking whether all this can be true. Stop it! "**Sargol**" does make thin people add flesh, but we don't ask you to take our word for it. Write us today and we will send you absolutely free a 50c. package for trial. **Cut off coupon below and pin to your letter.**

**THIS COUPON GOOD FOR 50c.
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\$60

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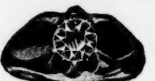
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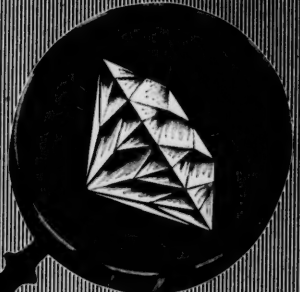
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